



The Adventure

We bring you good news that what God promised our forebears he is fulfilling in us ... Acts 13:32

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St. Mary's, Big Spring



From the Bishop's Desk

“Welcome back” and “Did you have a good sabbatical?” are the most frequent greetings I have received in the past month or so since I returned to the schedule of visitations and Confirmations, meetings, and office work. Those comments are quickly followed by, “Did you get all your research done?” and “How’s your Spanish?” Or as one person said “Aprendiste mucho español?” Some have even asked, “Did you get everything done that you wanted to do?” All good questions which I hope to address and answer in this article. Of course, it will be an abbreviated series of answers, as I am more than sure that no one wants to know ALL the details. I wrote the last Adventure article from the Forester Institute computer in San Jose Costa Rica two weeks into my studies there and gave a synopsis of my travels and work up to that time, so I will pick up from that point.

During my stay in San Jose, I lived with a delightful retired couple, Eduardo and Luz who spoke virtually no English. It was indeed an intensive time, with classes all morning focusing

on proper grammar and tense, and conversation the rest of the day with many others, all, of course, in Spanish. The most difficult part for me was the irregular verbs and their various forms. I struggled every day with that part of my study, and today I am still not comfortable with some forms. Of course, non-English speakers say the same thing about English, so I can take some comfort in that. In class we were expected to speak only Spanish and to work on perfecting our understanding of the various nuances of the language. There were days I left class with a headache—language study is Hard Work. But it was all well worth the effort. I consider my final exam as the taxi ride to the airport with a Spanish-only speaker as my driver. We had almost an hour together and conversed about a wide variety of topics including weather, auto repair, traffic, the possibility of war (the Iraq war had not yet begun) and the economy. I am sure there were other topics, but you get the idea. I understood him and I think he got the gist of what I was trying to say. So I passed my final!

During my stay in Costa Rica, I did get to see some of the countryside. Early on, I took a day trip which included a visit to the Volcano Poas, one of six active volcanoes in Costa Rica, a walk in a cloud forest, lunch in a rain forest, discovering poisonous frogs, spectacular waterfalls, a boat trip down the River Siripiqui, and a long bus ride home. One other weekend I journeyed to Manuel Antonio, a beach on the Pacific coast adjacent to a national park that is home to a wonderful variety of native animals of Costa Rica, including whitefaced monkeys, three-toed sloths, a miniature deer, and fabulous moths and butterflies. The only down side to this trip was that the temperature was about 37degrees Celsius (roughly 98 F) with 98%

humidity. I thought they might find what was left of me in a puddle.

I also took afternoon trips to nearby towns and villages to get a sense of life outside the big city. I spent one afternoon at the Shrine to the Virgin Mary in Cartago. Mary appeared there in about 1550 to a local maiden, and many miracles have been associated with her at that sight. The basilica is incredible in beauty and widely visited by the Roman Catholics of Costa Rica.

Many people have asked about the stability of the country. CR is a very stable democracy whose president is a psychiatrist. The economy, although currently primarily an agriculture base (coffee, bananas, pineapples etc) is moving to industrialize, Intel being one of the latest entries into the local market. There is no army, although police, both local and national, are evident everywhere. Tourists are completely safe, except for pickpockets, the major crime of the country. Of course, in some areas, drugs are a problem, and there is some gang activity, but I felt more secure in San Jose than in most major American cities.

Upon my return to Texas, we relaxed for a couple of days and then left for Colorado to continue the research into the life of my grandfather the Rev. John Wallis Ohl. I had heard for many years that he had come to Colorado from Ohio as a newspaperman but it was not until we got to Crested Butte that I could confirm that. Wallace/Wallis (he used both spellings until about 1890 when Wallis became the exclusive spelling) arrived in the Gunnison area about 1880, began a newspaper there, moved to Crested Butte in 1883 to open a newspaper there and continued that career until 1886 when he was ordained and moved to Aspen.

I had planned to try to visit all of the churches he served that are still in existence, but time simply did not permit that. After Aspen, Wallis served in Salida for 17 years, Pueblo, Grand Junction, Denver and a whole host of other communities where we no longer have congregations or in some cases even towns. Since Wallis was a chaplain for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, I am certain that his mission work in surrounding communities was made possible and financially feasible with a railroad pass.

When I was in Austin in December reading Colorado diocesan convention journals, I found an expense report from Wallis as Canon Missioner listing many thousand miles traveled and only \$99.00 in expenses. We were able to spend some time at Ascension Parish in Salida and plow through the parish registers, finding many good bits of information about Wallis and his first wife Amy who were married in 1889, had their first child Emma in 1890, their second child Amy Wallis in 1892. His wife died following childbirth and the child some six weeks later.

During our Colorado sojourn, we also spent time in the archives of the Diocese of Colorado, at the bishop's office in Denver, at the Colorado Historical museum, and the Denver Library's Western History archives. We read newspapers from 1880-1915, selectively of course, looked at old records, dug through genealogical records, and generally became acquainted with lots of Colorado history. I did discover, however, that there was simply not enough time to learn all I want to know about my namesake.

Much of April was spent working on my old (1982) Jeep that stays at BQCC. I have access to the shop for a few days at a time, where I can work no matter what the weather. This year's task included replacing the starter ring gear on

the flywheel, which meant pulling the transmission and transfer case. I also did a little bodywork but still have lots more to do on that end. The next task, maybe later in the year, will be to replace the rear axle of the Jeep. A little at a time has become my refrain when working on this project. Maybe by the time I retire it will be completely ready to go on the road.

We ended the month with a party for Sheila's mother's 85th birthday. She had never in her life had a birthday party so we thought it would be appropriate this year. Family came from all over the Southwest to be with her, and it was a great day. On Easter we were at our home parish in Chickasha, OK where I was raised, Sheila and I were married, two of our three children baptized, both my parents buried, various nieces and nephews baptized, and in some ways the ground of my faith.

All too soon, it was time to return to work and get back into the stride of life that describes the task of the bishop of Northwest Texas. As we reentered the task, it occurred to me that this job is something like running a marathon. St. Paul commends us to keep our eyes on the finish line, the prize which is life in Christ, and that is exactly what I have been doing as I make the drives across this beautiful country that comprises the diocese of Northwest Texas. It is indeed a joy and a privilege to minister with you. May we do Christ's work faithfully.

In His name.




***The Right Reverend
C. Wallis Ohl, Jr.***

***Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese
of Northwest Texas***

will ordain

Josefa (Josie) Rodriguez Rose

***To the Sacred Order of Priests
In Christ's One Holy Catholic
And Apostolic Church***

***Saturday, the Seventh of June
Two Thousand Three***

Eleven o'clock in the morning

***The Episcopal Church of the
Holy Trinity***

Midland, Texas



Anglican Reflections

ANGLICAN REFLECTIONS

The Rev. John H. Loving

Rector, Emmanuel Church - San Angelo

Since there has been considerable interest and response to the column on the Anglican Church in Moscow, I thought our readers might be also interested in learning more about Emmanuel's companion relationship with another St Andrew's in Russia: this one a Russian Orthodox parish in St Petersburg.

Following the collapse of the Communist government in the Soviet Union, many Christian bodies in the United States charged over to Russia to hand out Bibles on street corners in order to "bring Jesus to Russia" as some of them put it. Fortunately, the Anglican Communion took a different tack. We were well aware that the Russian Orthodox Church had been there all along, suffering persecution for seventy years, and making its quiet but courageous witness. We saw it as our privilege to support this ancient Christian Church in its effort to reach out to the millions of Russian people who had roots one thousand years old in the Orthodox tradition.

This cooperation between our two Churches is not a new thing. The scholarly Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius was founded in the early years of the twentieth century to foster theological dialogue between the Russian Orthodox and Anglican Churches. In contrast to the more

rigid hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, both the Orthodox and the Anglicans have organized themselves as families of relatively independent Churches. Just as the Anglicans look to the Archbishop of Canterbury and trace their history back through the Church in the British Isles, so the Orthodox revere the Ecumenical Patriarch, whose see is in Istanbul, and trace their history back through the Byzantine tradition of Eastern Christendom. Both Churches acknowledge the authority of Scripture, the early ecumenical councils of the Church, and the traditions of the Church Fathers. Both are liturgical churches whose worship centers in the Eucharist and the Daily Offices, and both have preserved the three-fold ordained ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons.

In more recent years, the Episcopal Church has appointed lay and ordained representatives to continue this dialogue and to learn more about the Russian Church. The support goes both ways. For example, for the first time in seventy years, the Orthodox Church was allowed to appoint chaplains to serve in the Russian Army, and they came to us to inquire how we managed this ministry within a pluralistic society.

Companion Relationship

Emmanuel Church in San Angelo became involved in a companion parish relationship following the example set by St Paul's in Lub-

bock under the leadership of the Rev. Bill Wright, and layman Bill Armstrong, who headed up their committee. At their suggestion, Emmanuel's outreach committee contacted the Rev. Jack Wilson, who heads up the Federation of International Professional Exchange (FIPE). This federation coordinates not only parish relationships, but also exchanges of teachers and medical personnel as well. When Emmanuel affiliated with this organization, the only "requirement" was that the parish agree to bring the priest and at least one lay person from the companion parish to this country and to send a priest and any other parishioners who could go to visit the companion parish in Russia.

The relationship between Emmanuel and St Andrew's Russian Orthodox Church was negotiated in 1995, and the first exchange visit was from Fr Mikhail Mokropolov, rector of St Andrew's, and layman Kyril Malaenkov to San Angelo at the end of May of that year. With the help of an interpreter, Fr Mikhail preached on Sunday morning. There was also a lunch meeting of the women of the parish as well as a talk by Fr Mikhail at our Wednesday evening gathering. We spent one night in Austin and arranged a tour of the state capitol in Austin as well as a visit to Fredericksburg. At the end of their visit, we celebrated with a Mexican-style fiesta complete with mariachis and margaritas!

In the summer of 1996, a delegation of eight from Emmanuel flew first to Moscow, where we

spent two days touring the ancient capital and visiting Sergiev Posad (the burial place of Sergius, Russia's patron saint). We then took the overnight train to St Petersburg, and were greeted at the dawn's early light by the full contingent of St Andrew's clergy in their cassocks as well as various members of the parish council. All five women in our delegation were given huge bouquets of flowers, and the lavish hospitality continued throughout our stay. The tourist sites were all fascinating—the Peter-Paul Fortress, the Hermitage, the magnificent churches and palaces—but what remains with us is the friendships established, the meals shared, and the stories exchanged. Some on the parish council had been “closet Christians” all their lives. One schoolteacher told of having to keep her faith a secret lest she jeopardize her occupation, her family's apartment, and her children's education. In several instances, it was not until “perestroika” that they were able to be open

about their faith. Others had grown up as loyal Communists, were gradually disillusioned, and began to seek out alternatives. Some had grandparents who had continued to pray for them and to speak to them of the worship and teachings of the Church.

There have been other visits—both ways—and we continue to support each other through prayer and correspondence and the exchange of gifts. The younger boys and girls in the two churches are now exchanging cards, letters, and photographs. One of the Lenten projects at Emmanuel this year was to answer the holiday greetings that came in January with individual photographs of our children taken at their “favorite place” in the church or education building, explaining why they had chosen that location. The mail between the two countries is not very reliable, so we will probably send these replies with a group from FIPE heading for St Petersburg this spring or summer.

Plans for the Fall

In late September Emmanuel will welcome guests from our companion parish once again: Fr Mikhail, Prof. Igor Tolochin (who teaches at the St Petersburg State University and serves as interpreter), and Ms Olga Shmeleva, who is Department Head for the Protection of Architectural Monuments in St Petersburg and vicinity. Whenever we have visited St Andrew's, Olga has taken us under her wing and given us wonderful tours of the royal palaces and other architectural and historical wonders. It will be a joy to welcome her for her first visit to the United States.

Ecumenical and international discussions take on quite a different dimension when the Russian across the table is someone with whom you have shared family stories, adventures, and impressions over a period of years! Freedom of religion takes on new meaning when you hear that two priests from the church you are visiting were martyred sixty-five or seventy years ago! One's understanding of the economy gets a jolt when you hear that just a few years ago, the value of the ruble was cut in half and yet prices remained the same or increased. Many lost their pensions with the collapse of the Soviet government, and about a third of the population is living below the poverty level. At the same time in Moscow there are beautiful shopping malls full of imported goods from around the world and a growing class of newly affluent who are quick to take advantage of the availability of these goods.

This companion relationship has been an adventure in faith as well as in international understanding and cultural traditions. Our horizons have been broadened, and our Russian friends have appreciated the hospitality extended to them and have come to a new understanding of the United States and its role in world events. On his last visit, Fr Mikhail said that if he could not live in Russia, he would like to come to Texas!

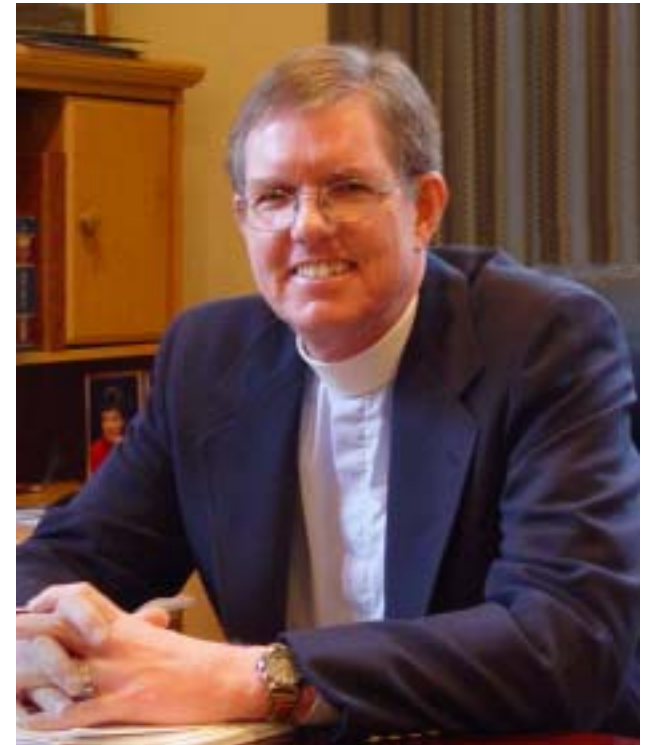
*For more information on possible companion parish relationships, contact the Rev. Jack Wilson by e-mail as follows:
jackfipe@hotmail.com.*



St. Andrew's Russian Orthodox Church in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The Canon's Comments....

*The Reverend Canon J. Michael Ehmer
Canon to the Ordinary*



“Where Does It All Go?”

Many of the questions I've been asked since assuming the duties of Canon to the Ordinary have to do with finances, and most of them deal with apportionment: Why is our apportionment so high? Where does all of our apportionment money go? Isn't there a way to decrease the amount? So, I thought I'd begin the first installment of this new column by addressing those questions. We'll take a look at our income as well as our expenses.

Before we get into that, however, a quick overview of our budgeting process is in order. We begin in the spring by asking for budget requests. The budget committee (with wide diocesan representation) meets several times between late spring and early fall to try and match the requests with the money available, and to put together a proposed balanced budget for submission to the Executive Council's fall meeting. The Executive Council reviews and possibly amends the budget before it is approved for submission to the Annual Diocesan Convention. The Convention reviews and possibly amends the budget before it is officially approved. It is then put into place on the first of

the following year. Throughout the year, however, the Executive Council compares our actual financial situation to the budget and amends the budget if necessary. (The Executive Council has this authority when the Convention is not in session.)

In looking at the budget itself, let's start with the least complicated part—income. Our diocese has basically three sources of income. About one-half a percent of our total revenue comes from miscellaneous areas and transfers from reserves. Unfortunately, over the years those reserves have been mostly exhausted.

The budget receives a bit more income from our endowment fund, which is overseen by our Board of Trustees. They have the task of ensuring our assets continue to grow while at the same time ensuring the diocese has sufficient funding for our operations. If they allow too much of the fund to be used for operations the fund will soon be depleted. Yet they can't allow the diocesan mission to go unfunded. This task was not as difficult when the stock markets were booming, but in recent years it's been a big problem. In fact, for the last three years the

diocese has used more money from the funds than the funds have generated. In other words, we're losing money—something we cannot continue to do. This endowment line item makes up approximately 8.5 percent of our income. Of course, one way to improve this situation is to increase our endowment funds. Have you remembered the diocese in your will?

The remaining line item (congregational apportionments) makes up about 91 percent of our income. While the methods for determining apportionment vary greatly among dioceses, traditionally, smaller dioceses like ours (at least in numbers), with small endowment funds, are forced into higher apportionments. For many years now apportionments in our diocese have been computed as 21 percent of Line A (Normal Operation Income) on the most recent year's Parochial Report. The Parochial Report defines Normal Operation Income as, “All funds, from whatever source, that are used for the general operation of the congregation.” (The five churches classified as “congregations” are assessed at one-half that rate.)

On the expense (or disbursement) side of the budget there are currently 116 different line items, so we obviously can't discuss each one. In this year's budget the items are divided among six major categories. Those categories, along with the percentage of our expenses allocated to each, and the major expense areas are as follows:

- Expenditures Outside the Diocese (17 percent)—includes support of the Episcopal Church at the national level, seminaries, Texas Conference of Churches, and expenses for General Convention and Lambeth Conference;
- Canonical Boards and Commissions (15 percent)—includes expenses for the Commission on Ministry, Bishop Quarterman Conference Center, and insurance for retired diocesan clergy;
- Program Expenses (5 percent)—includes expenses for communications, outreach, campus ministry, youth, and ministry development;

- Mission and Development (32 percent)—includes expenses for support to mission congregations, and salary packages for missionaries and chaplains;

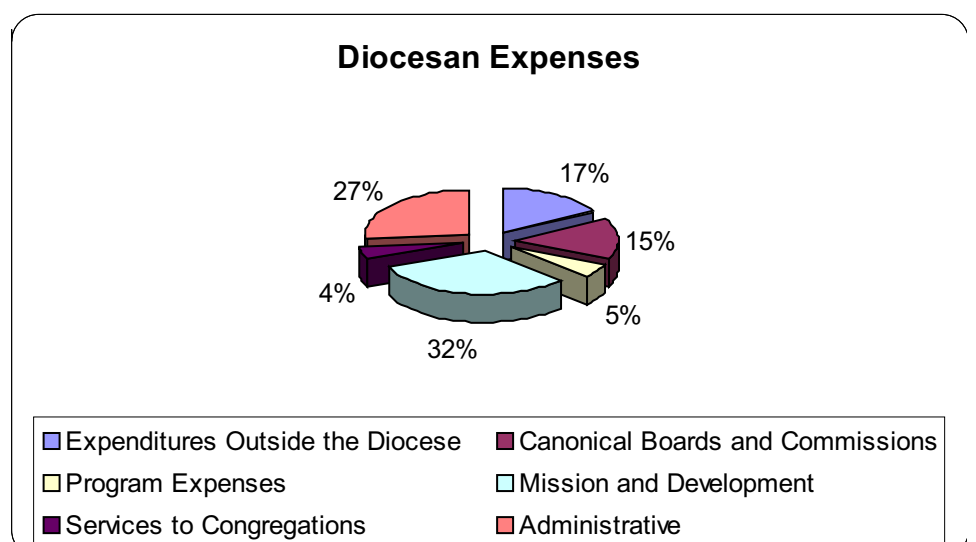
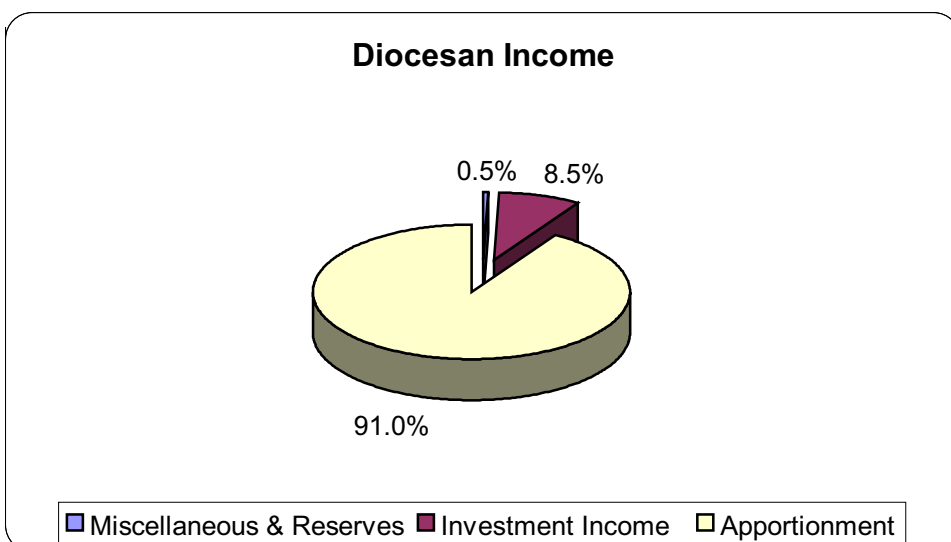
- Services to Congregations (4 percent)—includes the salary package for our Ministries Coordinator (Claire Cowden);

- Administration (27 percent)—includes the salary packages for the bishop, executive secretary, and business manager, as well as all office expenses.

You can see from the expense percentages, we actually do a great deal beyond just supporting the bishop. Seventy-three percent of our diocesan budget supports work outside the Hulsey Episcopal Center. If we include the items under Expenditures Outside the Diocese (most of which support the greater Episcopal Church and our participation in it) the amount required to be a diocese increases to 42 percent.

That still leaves 58 percent of the budget directly supporting mission work. Add to that all the mission work accomplished by the bishop and his immediate staff, in addition to their administrative tasks, and you can see that we are a very mission-minded diocese.

So the answer to one of the opening questions is that well over half of each congregation's apportionment goes towards mission work of some kind. Our apportionments are high because we choose to do mission work both inside and outside of our diocese, and since we are not heavily endowed (as some dioceses are) the price of doing so comes in the form of higher apportionments. As one priest in our diocese put it, "It's a small price to pay for the privilege of being in this diocese." Nevertheless, the finance committee, in their role as long-range financial planners, is looking into ways to possibly lower apportionments without decreasing our mission work.



St. Mary's Proud of Successful Advertising Campaign

The Adventure recently talked with the Rev. James Liggett, Rector, St. Mary's, Big Spring, about the church's advertising campaign and atmosphere of hospitality & welcome, both of which resulted in the largest Confirmation Class in 20 years and a 20% increase in the number of persons worshipping on Sundays.

Tell us about your ad campaign.

Over the last few years, St. Mary's has been involved in planning and goal setting for the parish, including developing a mission statement. Out of this work came a group interested in advertising.

St. Mary's membership has basically been stagnant: we've had few visitors and newcomers over the last few years.

We decided to be ambitious and do some advertising, even though there is not much precedent in the literature for a small, stable parish in a declining community to do much to fight the demographics.

We began our campaign in early October, 2002. We ran 100 one-minute radio ads per month. The ads were read by both myself and parishioners and were based on *Those Crazy Episcopalians*. We ran 12 weekly newspaper ads, also based on *Those Crazy Episcopalians*. We sponsored daily ads on the cable crawl, based on the Episcopal Ad Project. And we ran 120 30-second TV ads per month, and rotated the ads among the different stations. The TV ads were from the Episcopal Media Center.



The Rev. James Liggett, Rector, St. Mary's, Big Spring

The congregation was generally interested, and the money was raised by contributions from the congregation and a bequest. Continuing money for the ads will come from endowment income. There is some real expense to this.

Has the ad campaign changed during these 7 months?

Our first push was from October through Christmas. Since Christmas, we have focused on the TV and radio ads. We have added Spanish ads on local radio. We have three or four Spanish-speaking members who each did an ad on "What I like about St. Mary's." We are also doing a series around Cinco de Mayo. We run

occasional ads on the cable crawl to advertise special events.

We have more parishioners involved doing radio ads talking about what's attractive to me/why I like St. Mary's. And I ran a special series during Holy Week and Easter. We try to have three radio ads in rotation at any one time.

The Episcopal Media Center is adapting some TV ads for us, to make them specifically for St. Mary's.

We plan to continue the ads through this calendar year. We'll have to stop at some point.

What sort of preparations were involved?

I wrote a letter to the other churches in town before we started, telling them we're doing this, we are looking for the unchurched, and we are not looking to steal from them.

We stole completely from St. Christopher's {Lubbock} the idea of visitor cards to give folks. These cards are passed around in the offering plates, and we ask people to take them out of the plates and pass them out as invitations.

You mentioned the literature on church growth earlier. What research have you used or consulted in this process?

The Rev. Dr. Arlin Rothauge says that a pastoral-sized parish can incorporate only as many new people as the pastor can bring in. We're trying to prove him wrong. The connection of these 19 new persons is primarily through the congregation, not me.

The latest research shows that such things as taking cookies and even follow-up phone calls are seen as invasive, and are overall not the most effective approach. Newcomers and visitors respond most to feeling welcome during the experience of worship. Research also shows that a personal follow-up from the pastor is important. I am handwriting letters to provide that follow-up.

How was St. Mary's prepared to receive the people who responded to the ads?

We had a Newcomers' Group in place before the ads started and working throughout. We had some extra training for ushers and greeters.

Our Newcomers' Group initially had two vestry members, and we've now added one new member from the Confirmation Class, along with another member. This group is tracking all the folks who come through. They assign sponsors to the visitors. The sponsors provide a contact beyond the rector, invite people to events and stay in touch. We had a special training for the sponsors to explain what we were doing and the importance of relationships.

Our church events have been focused on new people. We held a Visitors' Day in January. We've had Parish Dinners. Our Lenten program looked at how Episcopalians do things, and this was aimed at newcomers.

Continued on page 10



The Bishop with St. Mary's largest Confirmation Class in 20 years

Radio Spots

Fr. Liggett

I'm Fr. Jim Liggett, the pastor of St. Mary's Episcopal Church. During the next few months, some of the people of St. Mary's will be talking with you about our Church.

At St. Mary's you will find very few "native-born" Episcopalians. Most of us are folks who looked hard until we found a church that satisfied a deep longing for something missing in our spiritual experience.

Maybe that's why the Episcopal Church, along with its reputation for peculiarities, has long been known as a "thinking-person's religion." It embraces so many different members who made up their own minds...then stopped looking.

We do not claim to have the "only religion" or even the absolutely right one. It's just the one that's right for us.

St. Mary's Church, 10th and Goliad in Big Spring. Sunday services, 8 and 10:30 AM, Sunday School, 9:30.

There is a place for you at St. Mary's.

St. Mary's Parishioner

I'm Scott McLaughlin, and I'm a member of St. Mary's Episcopal church. Today I want to say a word about our church.

Did you know that we read most of our prayers from a Book? It's true. Episcopalians base a large share of every worship service on "The Book of Common Prayer," a very UNcommon piece of literature.

Just like most churches use a hymnal because they want to sing together, we use a prayer book, too, because we like to pray together.

We believe there are plenty of good reasons for following the Prayer Book's carefully planned schedule and form of services throughout the year. For one thing, an individual church, and its worship services, are spared from having only what a particular minister likes best.

St. Mary's Church, 10th and Goliad in Big Spring. Sunday services, 8 and 10:30 AM, Sunday School, 9:30.

There is a place for you at St. Mary's.

We've had an extended adult education class looking at Christian living as Anglicans understand it. We built this class around our mission statement so that we can connect the business of moving deeper into the faith with the values our parish holds and tries to share.

What's the next step?

Inculturation for the new members. The front door is open; we've got to close the back door. We need to find ways of incorporating folk so that 10 years from now we're not wondering where they are.

We will have our first Rally Day with all parish groups represented. And we are making a flyer with ways of being active and who to contact.

I am beginning to talk with the vestry and congregation about what this growth might mean. This will make the parish different. In my latest newsletter column, I listed the names of our new members and challenged our church to get to know these new folks. I began to talk about how this will change our parish as we listen and respond to these new members.

The idea of talking about how this will make the parish different is important, because most of us want nothing to change but the numbers.

This is a big challenge: integrating folks into the life of a parish and make them fully a part of the parish. That's very hard for any small Episcopal parish in a small town to do.

Tell us something about the people in the Confirmation Class. Did the ads bring them to St. Mary's?

Most are "underchurched." Most have had some contact with religion in the past.

Very few were brought in by the ads alone. Most were brought in by parishioners because of the conversation and buzz around the ads. People who came in just because of the ads tended not to stay. People who came in because they were personally invited tended to stay.

How has the ad campaign and St. Mary's intentional work on hospitality affected the numbers?

Our Average Sunday Attendance has gone up 20%. Sunday attendance this Lent and

Easter went up from 72 (last year) to 90. These numbers reflect both Episcopalians returning to church and newcomers and visitors. Since October, we've had only 2 or 3 Sundays that we have not had visitors. We've had about 100 newcomers & visitors come through since we began the ads.

We have the largest Confirmation Class in 20 years: 16 to be confirmed or received, and 3 reaffirmations.

We've also seen heavy increase in use of the parish website. We've tripled the hits from last year. The website has consistently been part of our advertising. This shows the website is being used as a source of information.

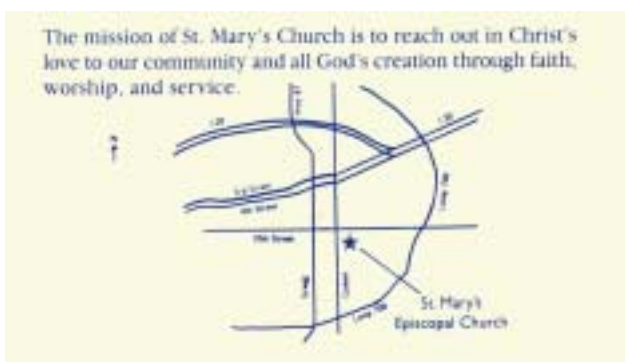
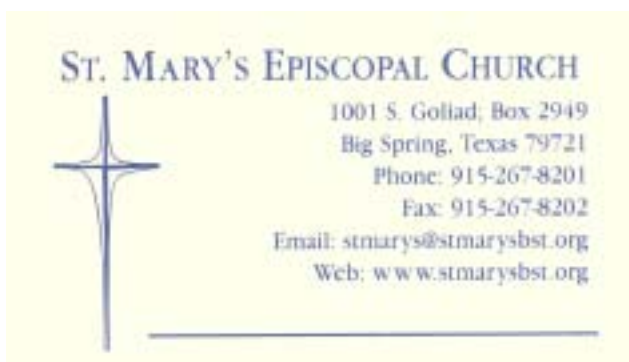
What's been the most positive outcome?

The level of energy in the parish has gone way up. The congregation is feeling good about itself and its mission.

At the last session of the Confirmation Class, we asked people to write down why they stayed at St. Mary's. They wrote things like, "Beautiful place," "I was welcomed but not pursued," "Liturgy," "Family Sense," and "Spiritual Resonance and Resources." No one mentioned we are the best show in town, program, groups or individual witnessing.

The reasons listed for staying are exactly the strengths of St. Mary's. We played to the strengths and realities of the parish, and this was reflected in the comments. We had a conceptual structure of what our parish is and what's good about it. We try to be who we are and the best we are.

Parishes like ours need to focus first on health; growth comes from health.



Professor Turns Students into Authors

by Vivi Hoang

Robert Pace began his history class at McMurry University last fall by addressing his students with the grand statement, "Some of you are going to write a book this semester."

Now, he says with a sly nod to future students, he has proof it can be done. The evidence lies in *On Eagles' Wings: A History of St. John's Episcopal School, Abilene, Texas, 1952-2002*.

"Undergraduate students almost never get to have an opportunity to be published," Pace said. "Being able to give them this opportunity is why this is most important to me."

The associate professor got the idea of putting his students to work on the daunting task back in early 2002. Pace serves as vice president of the St. John's Episcopal School board, which was discussing ways of celebrating the campus' 50th anniversary, which it marked this school year.

Pace approached the students in his "Historiography and Methods" class, which teaches how to research and write about history. He told them they could each either submit a scholarly article or join a group project compiling information for a book about St. John's history.

Six of the 20 students proved game for the book assignment. Jennifer Bartnesky of Harlingen signed on because she attended an Episcopal school when she was younger. "I knew what an important role it played in my life and how it still affects me even today," she said.

Students, after receiving a specific topic to explore, divvied up those sources and began the painstaking process of unearthing the past half-century. One student had to interpret cryptic notes from old board minutes. Interviews sometimes meant dealing with rambunctious pets and children while the subject spoke. Another student had a dog barking behind him the entire time.

The historians scanned 50 years' worth of the Abilene Reporter-News, sometimes emerging cross-eyed from peering at microfilm for hours. "Anytime you go through tons of ar-

chives, it's challenging to try to stay focused on what you're looking for," said McMurry student Daniel Price of Sweetwater.

Every interview was recorded on cassette tape, then transferred to audio compact discs to be shared with the others. The group met only once every other week, and so kept abreast of each other's progress through an online bulletin board.

When they convened with Pace, they were supposed to meet for three hours, but the gathering would often stretch to five hours because of the sheer quantity of work they had to do.

By semester's end, first drafts of the chapters had been written. The group met to edit and critique each other's work. Tough decisions had to be made, and students struggled with the fear of hurting someone's feelings and the anxiety of trimming people from the book.

"Finally, we just threw up our hands and said we've done the best we can," Pace said.

He spent the spring working with one of the students on the final revisions before the McWhiney Foundation Press published the 104-page book. The McWhiney Foundation Press is the publishing branch of the Grady McWhiney Research Foundation, a nonprofit group based at McMurry that is dedicated to history education and literacy.

The hardback includes an appendix of quotations from every pre-kindergartner to fifth-grader currently enrolled answering the question: "What is your favorite thing about St. John's?" Pace calls their answers a "snapshot in time" of the students.

The McMurry students were gratified to find the responses matched what they had chosen to put in the book as vital to understanding St. John's.

"That was my biggest reward," Bartnesky said. "We did all this work and research and were right on target. We got right to the heart of St. John's."

From an article in the Abilene Reporter-News.

Cursillo:

The Vacation of a Lifetime

Close your eyes and picture a vacation at heavenly retreat center away from everyday worries and stress where you can deeply feel the presence of the Holy Spirit each moment of the day. Imagine a weekend that not only abounds in prayer, meditation, and enlightening studies of God's word, but one filled with great food, fellowship and fun.

Cursillo provides such a vacation. Designed as a weekend of communion with God and fellow Christians, Cursillo invites men and women to "let go and let God", deepen their own relationships with Him and enhance their understanding of His will for them.

The next Cursillo, number 63 in this diocese, will be July 24 - 27, 2003 at Mercy Retreat Center in Slaton, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Thursday and concluding Sunday afternoon. This lovely facility in Slaton was selected because it is more centrally located within the diocese than other sites where weekends have been held recently. As you make plans for your summer getaways from work and obligations, include one day (Friday, July 25) in your calendar. Memories molded and new friends made will be with you forever.

Rectora for the weekend will be Betty Tucker, a member of St. Nicholas', Midland. She and her team are already at work, planning for this weekend. Now is your chance to get Cursillo on your calendar for July, so you have to tell someone that you already have something that weekend. Applications are available from your church office, or contact Mel or Jane Barnes, (806) 799-6721, or Caroline Holmes (915) 694-5245, and we will be glad to mail you one. Get yours in NOW; spaces are limited!

If you want to attend a Cursillo weekend, but you know you cannot attend #63 in July, go ahead and submit an application. Caroline is starting a waiting list, and when there are about 20 on that list, the Secretariat will schedule another weekend. We will find a weekend when you can attend.

Young Priests of Tomorrow: Province VII Sponsors College Interns

by the Rev. David Krause,
Episcopal Chaplain to Texas Tech

Ever wonder from where the young priests of tomorrow are coming?

Actually, there are an increasing number of younger people going to seminary. To encourage this trend, the Ministries in Higher Education network of Province VII is sponsoring two college intern positions this summer. Both young persons are working in our Diocese of Northwest Texas. Mark Sessing, a college student from the University of Oklahoma (home parish: St. John's, Odessa) and Mary Beth Hwang, a student from the University of Chicago, will be attempting to see if the Mitford books can be realized in west Texas. And along the way see if ordained life may be in their future.

Several years ago, many persons in our church realized the need for younger ordinands. To that end, several places have started discernment programs to encourage younger vocations, and familiarize college students with Holy Orders. The congregation of St. Michael and All Angels in Dallas, has an excellent example of such a program. A common feature of every one of these programs however, is that they operate in larger urban areas. The Ministries in Higher Education network of Province VII decided to create an opportunity for students to experience discernment and education in a smaller church community.

The Rev'd. Mary Hileman, Episcopal Chaplain to Oklahoma State University, and I approached the congregation of St. Mary the Virgin in Big Spring with this idea. The congregation there enthusiastically responded, and a

province wide search was on for the right student for the summer.

After much sifting and deliberation, Mark Sessing was selected for the position in Big Spring. Mark will begin his placement at St. Mary's in mid May, and will be there for six weeks. During this time, he will live with parishioners, and get a full taste of all the workings of a town parish.

His duties will include helping with Sunday services, home visitations, office work, and all the other regular duties of keeping a parish running smoothly. As an added bonus for Mark, the program also includes several components, which are designed to facilitate his own discernment of God's call in his life. There are regular

meetings with fellow Episcopalians, spiritual direction, and even an opportunity to attend an ordination.

Mark, a native of Odessa, serves as the president of the Canterbury Association at the University of Oklahoma. Mark is a rising Junior there, and has informally explored the idea of priesthood with his Rector, the Rev'd. Laura Deaderick. "I'm really excited to have this great opportunity, and simply can't wait to begin my time with the people of St. Mary's," exclaimed Mark when told he had been chosen for the position.

During the interview process, Mary Beth Hwang so impressed the interviewing committee that the committee explored the possibility of creating a second placement for the summer. Making this happen is more difficult than one might imagine. First, there was the issue of where to place her. Mary Beth, a native of Taiwan, does not have a car, or even a driver's license. Then there was the little matter of finding the additional funds to cover another placement. St. Paul's on the Plains, Lubbock, seemed to be the obvious answer to both of these needs. Close to the Tech campus, there are many apartments in the neighborhood available over the summer. Working together, the parish, the province and the Texas Tech Canterbury have raised the needed funds. As of press time, however, there are still some details to be worked out.

There is more time to work on Mary Beth's placement however. As she comes from a school operating on the trimester system, Mary Beth does not end her school year until mid June. If all the pieces do fall into place, Mary Beth will start her work in August, and work through mid-September. She will have many of the same opportunities as Mark does in Big Spring. In addition to her work with St. Paul's, she will



Mark Sessing



Mary Beth Hwang

also have responsibilities with the Canterbury program. St. Paul's is still working on some details, but the Rev'd Harry Allen, Interim Rector, is confident that all the wrinkles can be ironed smooth in plenty of time.

Mary Beth heard about the program from her chaplain at the University of Chicago, where she is very active at Brent House, the Episcopal campus ministry there. "I really want to explore Texas, it's a part of the US I've never seen. West Texas sounds particularly exciting," Mary Beth said. The child of Christian missionaries, Mary Beth looks upon this opportunity as a way of extending Christian witness.

Even with an occasional bump or two along the way, this program's investment in our future is sure to pay huge dividends in the lives of Episcopal college students. For what is really a fairly small amount of money and time, our students will know that we do indeed take them seriously, and greatly value their contributions to the faith.

What is the future of this program? Can we do so again next summer? Perhaps. As currently structured, the program moves to a different diocese within the province. Since this is the first year for this program, the future largely depends upon the experiences of these two young persons.



by Leslie Boykin,
Church of the Heavenly Rest, Abilene

I am pleased to represent the Diocese of Northwest Texas as coordinator of ERD. I met with former coordinator, Jane Barnes, in February for a briefing of my new responsibilities and the 'passing of the torch.' This actually meant that she loaded into my car two rather large cardboard boxes and a very well organized notebook bulging with information. Jane did a wonderful job, and will be a hard act to follow!

I will be attending the ERD network meeting in Baltimore the last weekend of May. I look forward to this training, and plan to return armed and ready for my new responsibilities.

We often think that Episcopal Relief and Development assists victims of disaster in faraway places; but last July Heavenly Rest, Abilene, received a grant of \$25,000 for those parishioners affected by a devastating flood. Many of those families had no flood insurance and were facing huge repair costs and other unexpected expenses. All were deeply appreciative of the immediate and generous assistance provided through ERD.

The following are excerpts from two recent articles in ERD news:

Episcopal Relief and Development is providing emergency relief for families affected by the explosion at the West Pharmaceutical Services plant in Kinston, North Carolina on January 29. An explosion in a four-story chemical mixing area killed four people.

Thirty-seven people were injured and nine suffered critical injuries from second- and third-degree burns and fractured bones. The roof and doors of the factory were

blown hundreds of feet and trees surrounding the facility were set ablaze.

When disaster strikes, it takes on various forms. Sometimes it is a natural disaster such as floods, hurricanes or earthquakes. Other disasters are caused by man and also affect many people.

Episcopal Relief and Development has partnered with the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) to help those suffering in Iraq. MECC's relief distribution centers are providing food, shelter, and other essentials to people in need throughout the region.

Reports from MECC state that nearly 3,000 families fled to unsafe areas in central and southern Iraq. Currently, there are 1,500 families in MECC centers in Karakosh and 800 families in al-Kush. Food, blankets, and baby milk are being sent to relief centers in Iraq and neighboring countries. A relief shipment containing one thousand food packages, 600 blankets, and 250 tents will be sent to Iraq through Amman. Relief workers are preparing to accommodate refugees who might flood the borders of Jordan and Syria.

Please make your contributions toward this fund payable to Episcopal Relief and Development and designate gifts for Iraqi Conflict.

Episcopal Relief and Development
PO Box 12043
Newark, NJ 07101

(800) 334-7626 ext. 5129

E-Mail: er-d@er-d.org
Website: www.er-d.org

Small Congregations are Backbone of Episcopal Church, Study Finds

by James Solheim,
Director of Episcopal News Service

“The relationship between congregation size and church growth is surprisingly tricky to measure,” says C. Kirk Hadaway, the Episcopal Church’s new director of research, in a new study just released by his office.

The study seeks to provide a more balanced perspective and combat what he calls “misinformation being circulated around the church using inadequate research procedures that gave an erroneous picture of the relationship between church size and growth, denigrating smaller churches and over-emphasizing the contribution of larger churches to the growth of the Episcopal Church.”

“Unlike other mainline Protestant denominations, the Episcopal Church grew rather than declined in overall worship attendance during the last five years,” according to the study. “Not counting new congregations, the Episcopal Church increased by nearly 17,000 attendees from 1995 to 2000.”

Most of that growth was added by churches in the two smallest size categories. “Very large churches added substantially to the overall growth of the denomination but not as much as churches with average Sunday attendance of 100 or less. Clearly, smaller churches are the major source of growth in the Episcopal Church.”

Yet smaller churches are more “volatile” than larger churches, more likely to grow but also more likely to decline and die, according to the study.

“So what is the relationship between size and growth in the Episcopal Church? Actually, there is not a strong relationship, but to the extent that a relationship exists, it is the smaller churches and the largest churches that are most likely to grow,” the study concludes.

“But the fact that small churches are more likely to grow is not the whole story. Smaller churches are also more likely to decline than churches in larger size categories,” for a number of reasons. They do not have the people, money, staff and programs that would help them grow and “often have great difficulty paying a full-time priest.” And the condition of smaller churches seems all the more dire because many of the churches that are smaller now have declined into their current size category. Thus the presence of very weak, declining churches among the current set of small churches obscures the fact that many small churches have great potential for growth.”

The study found, for example, that “the typical Episcopal congregation has an average Sunday attendance of 80 persons—and it is the typical Episcopal church that has been our primary source of growth during the last decade,” according to Hadaway.

He said that bishops in dioceses with many small churches “found the emphasis on large churches and the impression that most small churches were dying to be demoralizing. These wrong impressions had to be corrected before they came to be reflected in program and policy decisions.”

“The point is that any church can grow or decline, depending where it is on the growth cycle,” said the Rev. Charles Fulton, director of congregational growth and development. “But lots of people are confused about why and how that happens.”

The study is available on the church’s web site at <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/congdev/>.

Editors’ Note: Of the 37 churches in our diocese filing Parochial Reports for 2002, 27 (about 73%) report average Sunday attendance under 100. Five churches (about 14%) report average Sunday attendance of 75 - 95.



The Episcopal Church Women

Invite you to the
2003 Fall Conference
September 19 - 21st
At Bishop Quarterman
Conference Center
Amarillo, Texas

Featuring Conference
Leader
The Rev. Helen Appleburg
Founder, Community of
Hope

Conference reservation ma-
terials will be mailed to ECW
presidents, parish
communicators and all
parish offices by
July 1, 2003.

Questions? Please contact
Susan Kimbrough,
ECW treasurer
(806) 745-7740 or
skimbrough@cox.net



Loaves & Fishes

At its March 15th meeting, the Loaves & Fishes Board granted \$3,750 to St. Nicholas' Church, Midland to help fund a full-time Youth Minister position.

The Loaves and Fishes Fund welcomes proposals and applications from any of our mission outposts and diocesan committees. The Fund will consider assisting with financing for new mission and ministry initiatives in the Diocese of Northwest Texas. There are restrictions for grant requests.

The balance in the fund is

The Loaves and Fishes Committee will have its final meeting on August 23rd to consider applications for funding. Applications must be received at the Hulsey Episcopal Center no later than noon, August 4th.

Serving on the Loaves & Fishes Board are The Rt. Rev. Wallis Ohl, Mr. Bill Gilmore of Midland, Mr. Bill Russell of Lubbock, Mr. Dick Davis of Amarillo, and Deacon Carole Ricketts of Abilene.

2003 APPORTIONMENTS Paid Thru April 30, 2003

| Church | Apportionment | Paid | Balance | % Paid |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Abilene, Heavenly Rest | 117,826.83 | 39,275.60 | 78,551.23 | 33% |
| Abilene, St Mark's | 11,676.63 | 4,800.00 | 6,876.63 | 41% |
| Albany, Trinity | 1,232.54 | - | 1,232.54 | 0% |
| Amarillo, St Andrew's | 110,536.71 | 9,211.41 | 101,325.30 | 8% |
| Amarillo, St Peter's | 52,082.10 | 15,396.24 | 36,685.86 | 30% |
| Andrews, St. Matthias | 1,840.00 | - | 1,840.00 | 0% |
| Big Spring, St. Mary's | 38,806.32 | 12,935.44 | 25,870.88 | 33% |
| Borger, St Peter's | 16,721.73 | 4,180.50 | 12,541.23 | 25% |
| Brownfield, Good Shepherd | 5,348.91 | 4,000.00 | 1,348.91 | 75% |
| Canyon, St. George's | 10,192.21 | 1,891.14 | 8,301.07 | 19% |
| Childress, St. Luke's | 930.74 | 930.74 | - | 100% |
| Clarendon, St John's | 2,221.80 | 1,666.35 | 555.45 | 75% |
| Coleman, St. Mark's | 8,201.76 | 2,733.00 | 5,468.76 | 33% |
| Colorado City, All Saints' | 3,376.20 | 822.00 | 2,554.20 | 24% |
| Dalhart, St. James' | 24,862.53 | 8,287.48 | 16,575.05 | 33% |
| Dumas, St. Paul's | 3,072.27 | 1,028.00 | 2,044.27 | 33% |
| Hereford, St. Thomas | 10,985.91 | 2,678.03 | 8,307.88 | 24% |
| Kermit, St. Peter's | 1,223.00 | 1,223.00 | - | 100% |
| Levelland, St. Luke's | 3,283.35 | 1,092.00 | 2,191.35 | 33% |
| Lubbock, St. Christopher's | 40,398.12 | 13,466.00 | 26,932.12 | 33% |
| Lubbock, St. Paul's | 76,436.43 | 25,478.80 | 50,957.63 | 33% |
| Lubbock, St. Stephen's | 58,035.60 | 19,345.20 | 38,690.40 | 33% |
| Midland, Holy Trinity | 178,462.20 | 59,487.38 | 118,974.82 | 33% |
| Midland St. Nicholas | 91,123.38 | 30,374.48 | 60,748.90 | 33% |
| Monahans, St. James' | 4,388.16 | 1,464.00 | 2,924.16 | 33% |
| Odessa, St. Barnabas | 51,585.87 | 17,195.32 | 34,390.55 | 33% |
| Odessa, St. John's | 39,335.94 | 13,121.00 | 26,214.94 | 33% |
| Odessa, San Miguel | 756.00 | - | 756.00 | 0% |
| Pampa, St. Matthew's | 37,048.79 | 12,349.68 | 24,699.11 | 33% |
| Perryton, All Saints' | 653.28 | 272.70 | 380.58 | 42% |
| Plainview, St. Mark's | 12,172.41 | 4,057.36 | 8,115.05 | 33% |
| Quanah, Trinity | 880.14 | - | 880.14 | 0% |
| San Angelo, Emmanuel | 79,798.95 | 5,845.53 | 73,953.42 | 7% |
| San Angelo, Good Shepherd | 49,856.94 | 16,619.00 | 33,237.94 | 33% |
| Shamrock, St Michael's | 229.42 | - | 229.42 | 0% |
| Sweetwater, St Stephens | 24,542.07 | 8,180.72 | 16,361.35 | 33% |
| Vernon, Grace | 2,494.88 | 831.60 | 1,663.28 | 33% |
| TOTALS | 1,172,620.12 | 340,239.70 | 832,380.42 | 29% |

The Rev. Jaime Case Named Executive Director of Province VII Center for Hispanic Ministries

By Bob Kinney, ETSS

The Rev. Jaime Case, who guided the growth of a multicultural mission and a Jubilee Center in Austin for nine years, has been named executive director of Province VII's Center for Hispanic Ministries.

Case, a 1994 graduate of the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest, will begin work at the center, housed on the seminary campus, on July 1. Participation of lay people in parish life flourished and Sunday attendance quadrupled during his ministry at San Francisco de Asis mission in South Austin. El Buen Samaritano, the outreach ministry of the parish, serves the working poor and homeless of Austin with a budget that grew from \$300,000 to \$1.6 million during Case's leadership. A \$7.3 million capital campaign nears completion as the parish and center will move to a new 33,000 sq. ft. complex in early summer.

"Jaime Case is a man of great depth," said Gilberto Hinojosa, chair of the Hispanic Center's board of directors from Ft. Worth, Texas. "He will be a tremendous resource person for clergy and lay leaders in Province VII. They have great respect for Jaime because he knows what strategies to take and what steps are needed for successful ministry."

Case, who grew up in the Philippines with missionary parents, brings a multicultural view to the Hispanic Center. "I intend to demythologize Hispanic ministry and make it more accessible to all. We are living in multicultural times. Let's learn to live into this with the largest group of people possible - Hispanics," he said. Case envisions fostering an appreciation for all things Hispanic, encouraging people to become "Hispanophiles" - much like others who are Anglophiles or Francophiles.

"As an Anglo, I embrace Hispanic ministry for my own well-being as a person. We must witness to this large group of Hispanics who are



The Rev. Jaime Case, executive director of Province VII's Center for Hispanic Ministries.

our neighbors. We must risk loving people who are very different from us," he said.

"With his vision for mission, his successful initiative in Hispanic ministry, and his dynamic leadership, Jaime Case is the ideal person to energize the center in a new century," said the Very Rev'd Dr. Titus Presler, dean and president of the Seminary of the Southwest. "Jaime has great personal skills, and his background equips him to build relationships among Hispanics, other minorities, and the majority Anglo community in the Episcopal Church. His presence at the seminary will enhance the strong multicultural emphasis of the Seminary of the Southwest."

Case envisions the Hispanic Center as a vibrant place for teaching and learning that intentionally plants multicultural congregations. Successful models for Hispanic ministries will be

shared with dioceses throughout the province and the wider church. Online resources will be available for sharing liturgy, pastoral care, teaching and small group formation.

Case plans to link the Center with theological education at the Seminary of the Southwest. Portable ministry schools will provide regional hands-on learning for seminarians and lay leaders. Austin-based ministry teams can assist in helping to plant and revitalize churches.

In addition to work with the Seminary of the Southwest, Case will foster greater ties with the Austin Lutheran and Presbyterian seminaries and the Hispanic Theological Union, the joint theological education venture of all three seminaries.

Case began working at San Francisco and El Buen when he was a senior at the Seminary of the Southwest. El Buen Samaritano was "struggling mightily with its identity and purpose." Fundraising initiatives helped expand its medical clinic and outreach offerings like English as a Second Language courses.

Sunday attendance at San Francisco numbered about 50 in the early years and grew to about 180 by last year. Fresh out of seminary, Case was on a learning curve. He credits Bishop Alard, former Hispanic Center director, as a mentor, as well as the Rev. Al Rodriguez, former El Buen director and now rector of St. John's Church, Austin. "I was working constantly during my first five years and I was usually exhausted," he said. He fostered a nucleus of dedicated parishioners who took responsibility for teaching classes and planning events and the parish grew with a wider base of participation.

So eight years after he left the seminary campus, Case is returning to begin a new ministry that will stretch far beyond South Austin.

"The Seminary of the Southwest has given me a lot of gifts as a student and a priest. Now I want to give something back," Case said.