Environmental Justice for the Beloved Community

By P. Joshua “Griff” Griffin
Ah, you who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is room for no one but you, and you are left to live alone in the midst of the land! The Lord of hosts has sworn in my hearing: Surely many houses shall be desolate, large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant. For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield a mere ephah. (Is. 5:8-10)

In the southwest corner of Rwanda, in the tiny village of Nkondo, there is an Episcopal church. A tin roof rests upon a matrix of cut saplings that straddle four walls of homemade brick. Women with babies, children, and men sit on blankets or benches. Throughout the service, the choir is accompanied by a dusty keyboard—powered by a car battery that rests in a wheelbarrow beside the maestro. Each week the battery is wheeled to town for a recharge. When it is time for the offering, members of the congregation proceed one by one toward the altar and drop coins, or decaying paper bills, in a basket. Those members of the community lacking any disposable income add their personal possessions to a pile of simple household items, which are then auctioned off to “wealthier” members of the congregation—the proceeds going directly into the offering. After songs, dances, testimonies, and sermons, the four-hour service concludes.

On my way out, I notice something peculiar. Rising up from the eroded sun-baked soil that surrounds the church are about a half-dozen carefully planted moringa trees. I ask the priest, Emmanuel, “Who planted these trees?” He tells me it was the church environmental committee. “What?” I thought, “This church, with its car-battery powered keyboard, has an environmental committee?”

The people I met in Nkondo Parish recognize the only way forward. They understand that the good life begins and ends with the land. They have begun, though their resources are very little, to cultivate the Kingdom of God through the planting of trees. Trees provide firewood, construction materials, food, shade, animal fodder, and garden mulch. Trees eventually rebuild the soil, and even improve local and global air quality. The people of Nkondo are actively struggling against a degradation that faces all of us. In their efforts to heal their land, they also do us a great service.

Despite the powerful witness of churches like Nkondo, I believe the “green” movement is at a point of moral crisis. In industrial consumer societies like the United States, being “green” is at risk of coming to mean little more than a label we attach to products—products that most of the human population cannot afford to purchase. Far too often we Christians fail to make the connection between “caring for Creation” and struggling for social, economic, racial and political justice. Some environmentalists fear that a strong social critique will make an urgent message politically less palatable. Those human communities that struggle for day-to-day survival often cannot be bothered with planetary survival problems like global climate change and massive species extinction. But if the issues facing our world are pursued in isolation from one another, all risks being lost.

Many have recognized the connection between the domination of nature and the domination of human beings. The well-known Anglican C.S. Lewis in Abolition of Man makes the observation that “what we call Man’s power over Nature turns out to be a power exercised by some men over other men with Nature as its instrument.” Dr. James Cone, the father of black liberation theology, painfully pointed out that “the logic that led to slavery and segregation in the Americas, colonization and Apartheid in Africa... is the same one that leads to the exploitation of animals and the ravaging of nature.” Surely by now we have overcome such logic or have we?

In January 2007, a UC Santa Cruz study of toxics in the Bay Area concluded that although the Bay Area “has often prided itself on leading the state on environmental issues...” it is also characterized by an unequal distribution of our environmental burdens and opportunities.” In a trend that holds true throughout the country and around the world, the report finds “a separate and independent effect of race on estimated pollution burdens. Communities of color, who often feel they may be disparately impacted by undesirable land uses, indeed have reason to be concerned.” But toxic exposure is not the only environmental issue that disproportionately affects marginalized or impoverished populations around the world. The UN warns that climate change has already begun to create scores of “environmental refugees” worldwide. Within the geographic boundaries of our diocese, some particular hotspots...
Earth Theology

The Church needs to act in the area of environmental ministry, and our action needs to be comprehensive. By this I mean that in addition to the direct work of simplifying and greening our lives, both individually and communally, and the strategic and powerful work of advocacy, we also need to act theologically.

Our prayer is action, and our prayerful consideration of God-with-us, that is, the doing of theology, is action as well. Direct action and advocacy can be, in fact need to be, prayerful action, but it is theology that is the unique contribution of faith communities to the environmental movement.

We need to return to our sacred texts, the writings of the Bible, and prayerfully inquire on their meanings for the care of the earth. Such theological action will demand of us new eyes and ears, new ways of perceiving the messages of God.

One of the most-quoted verses of the Bible illustrates what I mean: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

Since the “death of nature” that is shearing away from nature of its radiant, luminous, animated, soulful qualities — a killing that took place as the Enlightenment got into full swing (see Carolyn Merchant’s The Death of Nature) — it is difficult for us to read John 3:16 with reference to anything but the human world.

Read as a human-only promise, eternal life descends into the realm of a personal possession, the “Precious” of Golum, to be used and enjoyed within the circuit of our own life-worlds.

Read as I think the gospel meant it, we see that because God loves the whole world, the Savior came into this world as a servant, to incarnate our very stance as humans, servants to one another and to the whole created order.

When I read John 3:16 in this way, as a call to servanthood towards the whole world, I feel better; my soul relaxes and expands with a sense of aligning with what we were created to be and do, rather than the constricted feeling that comes with living within the confines of what Thomas Keating calls the “false self.”

This experience of “fit,” as well as intellectual satisfaction, is a sign that I am on a healthy theological path, that God, if you will, is answering my prayers. It is my sense that more and more people are discovering the joy of this alignment with what Paul called a sober assessment of ourselves, a coming down to where we ought to be. Such a sense of being at last at home in ourselves and in our world is the theological fruit we might offer a waiting world. ♦

The Rt. Rev. Marc Handley Andrus Bishop

Special Convention May 10

On Saturday, May 10, a special convention of the Diocese of California will be held at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. The purpose of the convention is to consider and vote on proposed canonical changes resulting from the governance review. The convention will also be presented with a report from the year-long Beloved Community visioning process. As the conclusion of the governance review and the strategic visioning process, the special convention will provide a landmark for the new direction of the diocese. The convention begins at 9 a.m. in Gresham Hall. ♦

Letter to the Editor

I seem to me that in recent years the public has been discouraged from purchasing art or other objects carved from ivory, particularly in regard to the endangered species from which it comes. Granted the piece in question was purchased in 1959, before the various species were declared endangered. But it seems to me that to publicly exhibit and express pleasure in an item which exhibits not contribute to the negative attitude we need to have now regarding carved ivory. Tourists, when traveling to China, etc., are admonished NOT to purchase carved ivory, regardless of its attractiveness. Just a thought.

Kay Wells
Bishop’s Ranch “Congregation”

I appreciate the letter from Kay Wells. Her concerns echo mine. The crosier is a beautiful art object, with complex religious iconography deployed in the delicate sculpture. It is perhaps 300 years old, and from a culture and time in which ivory might have come into an artist’s hands in a very different way than the horrific world of poaching in which we now live. That early-modern world, however, is far from our reality now. Now, the religious meaning of the crosier, as a symbol of the pastoral ministry of a bishop and in the details of its sculptural meaning, is eclipsed by the association with the commodification of living creatures, the denial of their dignity in the world, and the very “death of nature” written about by Carolyn Merchant.

It was my intent, after the ivory crosier was restored, to use it the one time, one Christmas Eve, and to put it on display after that, both because I don’t want a precious art object to be shattered again, and because of the moral ambiguity of the object in our current world. ♦

P. Joshua “Griff” Griffin is a second year M.Div. student at Harvard Divinity School and a nominee for ordination to the priesthood in the Diocese of New Hampshire. From June 2007 to Jan. 2008, he interned with the Diocese of California to coordinate the Diocesan Commission for the Environment.

Association, and GreenAction for Health & Environmental Justice. In a shocking reiteration of Cone’s conclusion BVHP is also a community of color, with 48% of residents being African American, 23% Asian and Pacific Islanders, and 17% Hispanic according to 2000 US Census data.

Bayview Hunters Point is also story of resistance to what can only be termed environmental racism. In April 2006 residents blockaded the entrances to the PG&E Hunters Point Power Plant, which was shut down the following month, after years of struggle. Currently, a new coalition known as the Stop Lennar Action Movement (SLAM), is being lead by a group of neighborhood clergy in response to months of un-abated toxic asbestos dust which recently bombarded the community from a city approved project to re-develop the Naval Shipyard.

Unfortunately BVHP is not unique in the Diocese of California. Richmond is well-known for its struggle against violence. We might ask ourselves what effect the presence of a toxic Chevron refinery has in that city. Further still, what kind of violence could be inherent in Chevron’s recent proposal to expand this dirty operation?

What is the role of Christians amid this sea of degradation, environmental racism and violence? An authentic Christian response must pursue ways of living on earth that simultaneously nurture both human and non-human flourishing. The study of ecology reveals to us that such kinds of flourishing are mutually interdependent. This means reconsidering what it means to be human and therefore what it means to be the Church in light of modern ecology.

Christian environmentalism calls into question the fundamental assumption of Economics 101 that “more is better.” Indeed, for some members of our earth family, more would indeed be better — adequate food, shelter, sanitation, health care and education would be a good place to start for most of the world. But for many of us, less would indeed be more. More charitable contributions are not enough to solve our current predicament; what is needed is a total redempion, if not restructuring, of the systems that lead to and maintain the present imbalances.

Each one of us must ask ourselves: Is the work I do in the world — that is my ministry, whether lay or ordained — in line with God’s redemptive project of “making all things new?” Are the prayers I pray on Sunday — prayers for justice, peace, and the integrity of God’s beloved Creation — embodied in the 90% of my life that is lived outside the parish? How do I envision the Beloved Community? Does it include only my family, my parish, and my country, or does it extend to our watersheds, our neighborhoods, our planet? Who is my neighbor? ♦

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Shortly before Christmas 2007, I received a phone call from the Rev. John Kirkley, rector of St. John the Evangelist, San Francisco. He told me that the company he was working for had received a request from St. John’s to host their website. He pointed out that St. John’s mission field was challenging, and that they needed to repent from the lifestyle they were currently promoting. He agreed that St. John’s mission field needed to be more inclusive and welcoming to all people, regardless of their sexual orientation. He emphasized that St. John’s was committed to being a church that welcomed all people into the life and ministry of the Church, and that they needed to overturn the policies that were exclusionary and harmful to the spiritual well-being of their congregation.

In the letter Elexio sent to St. John’s, they stated that their company determined that the policies regarding the non-acceptance of lesbian and gay persons were inconsistent with their mission and values. They stated that they had determined to reject any congregation in the Diocese of California that was not inclusive of lesbian and gay persons. They also stated that they had already done a great deal of work with communications associations and had determined that it was necessary to change their policies.

I was impressed by the work that included the new DioCal brand identity (see logo on page 1). We plan to keep the layout and design of the current dioCal site, as it is the product of some hard work within this diocese. After many impressive proposals, we were welcoming lesbian and gay people as full members of Christ’s body. This was what would be objectionable to most of the clients of Elexio. As we live into being the beloved community, it has been our decision that rejection of any congregation in the Diocese of California is a rejection of us all. Therefore, we have decided to terminate our agreement with Elexio as well.

Soon after Kirkley brought the Elexio letter to the attention of the Communications Working Group, we quickly began looking for another web solution for the diocesan website. Diocesan Web Administrator Greg Bilke created a Request for Proposals (RFP) distributed it through online listing services and to companies who could not only meet the technical needs of the diocesan website, but also of our congregations. We had already done a great deal of work with communications associations like Monica Burden conducting surveys and interviews that led to a new user interface for the site, and Mel Adbiborn (member of St. Stephen’s, Orinda, and president of Episcopal Church Visual Arts) had done the design work that included the new DioCal brand identity (see logo on page 1). We plan to keep the layout and design of the current dioCal site, as it is the product of some hard work within this diocese. After many impressive proposals, we were welcoming lesbian and gay people as full members of Christ’s body. This was what would be objectionable to most of the clients of Elexio. As we live into being the beloved community, it has been our decision that rejection of any congregation in the Diocese of California is a rejection of us all. Therefore, we have decided to terminate our agreement with Elexio as well.

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I’m Going to Iran

Just a note to tell you that from April 24 until May 7, I will be in Iran as a member of a delegation from the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR). FOR’s Iran delegation is a grassroots group of civil rights activists who are seeking friendship and solidarity with the people of Iran at a time when rhetoric and action do not always match. As we live into being the beloved community, it has been our decision that rejection of any congregation in the Diocese of California is a rejection of us all. Therefore, we have decided to terminate our agreement with Elexio as well.

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Empowering Generosity
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n response to the urgency of the environmental crisis that confronts us, and in acknowledgment of the importance of the Church in addressing the global problem of environmental degradation, last year the Diocese of California put new, urgent attention on its Commission for the Environment (COE). This commission’s purpose is to engage our churches in a deeper understanding of the spiritual dimensions of ecological problems and to formulate those responses that will enable us to become centers of ecological understanding, action and healing.

Programs of the COE include providing resources to parish liaisons for the creation and support of parish environmental committees, enabling parish liaisons to network with each other, providing theological and liturgical resources relevant to environmental issues, offering adult education materials (such as DVDs and relevant curricula), hosting special events and workshops, and facilitating communication within the diocese regarding environmental issues.

The COE is co-chaired by the Rev. Canon Sally G. Bingham and Barbara Bisel and is under the direction of a dozen members sharing their experience in theology and environmental science, technology and industry. At the request of Bishop Marc, intern P Joshua “Griff” Griffin helped to recruit liaisons from over 70 of our diocesan parishes. Many of these liaisons already have active Creation Care committees at their churches, while others are just getting started.

In an effort to encourage Creation Care committees off to a strong start, workshops were held in each of the five deanery regions from October through January. The new liaisons were all encouraged to attend. The workshops included discussions of theology and eco-justice and reviews of resources and ideas for structuring parish programs.

We are continuing to build our liaison network via a monthly COE e-newsletter that includes announcements about special events, speakers and topical legislation; Creation Care “factoids” for parish Sunday Bulletins designed to increase parishioner awareness of their role in caring for the Earth; lengthier articles that may be shared with parishioners through church newsletters; communication about programs such as cloth bag sales, recycling and energy programs; and success stories of individual parishes.

We look forward to continuing to develop the work of our liaisons by organizing periodic retreats and workshops. In addition, the COE has a webpage, (www.diocal.org/environment) that includes notices of speaker events and a full listing of helpful websites. Parishioners who would like to become involved in their parish Creation Care group are invited to contact their parish liaison.

**Information Technology in DioCal**

By Monica Burden

I
n February, the Communications Working Group (CWG) at Diocesan House launched a survey on information technology (IT) use in the Diocese of California. The purpose of the survey was to begin assessing the IT capacities and needs of parishes in the diocese. The survey asked for information about how congregations maintain and use membership and pledge information systems as well as financial data.

Of the 83 congregations in the diocese, 62 responded to the survey. Windows users (mostly Windows XP) accounted for 72% of the respondents, Mac users 23%, and a few congregations reported being cross-platform. Most respondents say that when they have IT problems they either find a way to solve the problem themselves or rely on knowledgeable parishioners or friends to help; only 12% say they use a paid consultant or company for IT support.

Nearly all the congregations that responded have a website (98%), usually designed by a church employee or a volunteer. 70% produce an electronic version of their newsletter, most commonly distributed by attaching a PDF to emails or by posting a PDF online for download. The programs congregations use most frequently are Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Intuit’s Quickbooks or Quicken, and Microsoft Outlook or Entourage.

The survey also asked about how congregations handle membership information and pledge and financial reporting. Membership information is usually tracked by a paid staff member (54%) or clergy (26%). Many different methods are used to keep track of church members, from paper-based records to Excel spreadsheets to dedicated commercial software like ACS and Church Windows. The most important aspect of a membership tracking system, according to the respondents, is ease of use. 59% report they are satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their current system, while 41% are not satisfied, although generally users would like to see better integration with email and with other information management systems, such as pledge management and financial reports.

Pledge and financial information is typically maintained by a volunteer through Quickbooks or Quicken, Excel, or dedicated commercial software such as ACS or Church Windows. 72% of congregations report they are satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their current system. Again, the most important feature is ease of use; the ability to automatically generate regular statements is also important. However, many users also say that they would like to see their information management systems integrated.

Finally, the survey asked if respondents would be interested in a diocesan-based shared system to manage information, such as a hosted server with terminal capacity at the parish. 45% said they would be interested such a solution, while 35% were not interested in such a solution and 20% said they would need more information before deciding.

These survey results provide the CWG a place to begin planning a technological direction for the future. It is clear that parishes that cannot afford enterprise-quality IT support or software are challenged to find methods that work for them. Despite the variation in IT capacities across the diocese, nearly all respondents ranked technology as very or somewhat important to carrying out their ministry. Technology is clearly an integral part of building the Beloved Community, and so the CWG will be seeking ways to make IT more accessible to all DioCal congregations.

**Commission for the Environment Renewed**

By Barbara Bisel

F
ew people would have predicted the acceptance of a solar energy system by a congregation in Berkeley, California, which is located in a part of the state that has been less than enthusiastic about exploring solar power. Yet the First Congregational Church in Berkeley (FCCB) is one of the first in the diocese to have installed a solar energy system.

The idea for the project came about through ongoing conversation within the congregation and a gift of $10,000 to be used specifically to install a solar energy system. Beginning in January 2007, the congregation raised the necessary balance and an initial installation cost of $54,000 was reduced to $1,617, or 92 percent higher.

Doug Merrill of St. Anselm’s said the project came about through ongoing conversation within the congregation and a gift of $10,000 to be used specifically to install a solar energy system. Beginning in January 2007, the congregation raised the necessary balance and an initial installation cost of $54,000 was reduced to $1,617, or 92 percent higher.
Environmental Projects Around the Diocese

We asked parishes around DioCal to tell us what they did last year to raise environmental consciousness and reduce environmental footprints. From large actions, like installing solar panels, to small actions, like changing light bulbs, it seems like every parish has a story. Here’s what some environmental liaisons report happened in their parishes.

All Souls, Berkeley
Nancy Snow

The major project of the All Souls Environmental Team was organizing and conducting the year-long “All Souls Creation Journey: A Year to Help Stem Global Warming.” Forty-seven households representing over 100 people participated. They found many creative as well as tried-and-true methods of creating a smaller carbon footprint, and many of them plan to continue looking for new ways to change their habits to conserve more energy. Large projects included new solar panels, energy efficient washers and dryers, hybrid car purchases, home remodeling for energy efficiency. Just as remarkable were the many who walked or biked more; took public transportation more frequently; changed to all or most fluorescent bulbs; saved water through taking shorter showers, washing clothes in cold water, and reducing the number of laundry loads per week; pooled errands to effect gas savings; turned to locally produced in-season and/or organic food; now are all or mostly vegetarians; bought wild or sustainably farmed fish and free range beef; and significantly reduced their junk mail.

Christ Church, Portola Valley
Timi and Robb Most

Christ Church’s Creation Care group, with 16 members, has held a CFL bulb giveaway of 200 bulbs, we are providing weekly environmental tips in the church bulletin, we are working on an upcoming environmental speaker series and in March we will be launching a Cool Campaign along the Actera model (www.actera.org). Actera is an organization in Palo Alto that provides actions for a sustainable Earth. The Cool Campaign is a community project that engages the congregation to take action to change behaviors that relate to global warming. The campaign includes surveying behavior change and celebrating progress. The Cool Campaign includes monthly challenges and goals and it progresses over four months.

Good Shepherd, Belmont
Bob Brooks

One member of the congregation, who regularly makes the coffee for social hour and oversees the kitchen, is called “the Queen of recycling” because of her efforts to make us all keep tabs on recycling and paper use, both in the church and at home. Compact fluorescent bulbs have been installed in the parish hall, on stairways, and every place else they can be used; people are being urged to use them at home and information on disposal provided. The church and meeting hall space heating systems have been put on timers so heat only comes on when needed.

Holy Innocents, San Francisco
Elizabeth Krueger

Having applied for certification as a San Francisco Green Business, Holy Innocents embraced stewardship of the Earth from floor to ceiling — literally. In renovating the parish hall, great care was taken to choose materials from sustainable sources, like (beautiful) new flooring. The children initiated a sales campaign for eco-friendly lights, replacing incandescent bulbs throughout the parish, both in the church and in their homes. They reassessed their use of harmful materials (like styrofoam cups), switching to more environmentally sound alternatives (like ceramic and glass plates and cups). Supporting local growers, while reducing, reusing, and recycling, they redistribute their altar flowers to hospitals and institutions. Holy Innocents believes that their commitment to environmentalism helps locally in their own community and is foundational to invoking social justice in the world at large.

Resurrection, Pleasant Hill
Phil Matthews

The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection conducts an Earth Service once a month, usually on Saturdays at 8 a.m. at the church or up in hills of the East Bay such as Briones. The service is based upon Celtic prayers, the Anglican prayer book, biblical readings, and Native American prayers. It is meant to allow one to obtain a deeper spiritual understanding through connecting with nature.

On April 19, 2008, members of St. Edmunds, Pacifica, will assist with the 4th annual Earth Day community cleanup to rid the beaches, streets, and creeks of litter.

St. Ambrose, Foster City
Warren Wong

The incandescent light bulbs in the church have been replaced by compact fluorescent bulbs, with a consequent reduction in the electric bill. The parish has endorsed the effort of the Foster City Cool Cities group (see http://coolcities.us/) to persuade the city to make further progress toward becoming a green city, particularly by signing the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Articles in the monthly parish newsletter have focused on issues that concern individuals and families, such as water conservation, the environmental impact of using bottled water, the computation of carbon footprints, and a summary of some of Time Magazine’s “51 Things We Can Do” to slow global warming.

St. Anne’s, Fremont
Theresa Gain

St. Anne’s Fremont is currently focused on recycling and resource conservation. They finally got their waste management company to give them a recycle bin. Prior to that parishioners took the recyclables home. They have converted their EEM program from using consumable paper/Styrofoam/plastic dinnerware to washable/reusable place settings. They are also converting their coffee hours back to ceramic mugs in lieu of paper/Styrofoam. They are planning on participating in the city’s Earth Day Fair on April 19 and are planning an intergenerational worship on April 20 with an “Earth Day” theme.

St. Anselm’s, Lafayette
Doug Merrill

In 2007, St. Anselm’s installed a 6.6 kw-capacity solar electricity generating system, replaced their old A-1 electric meter with an A-6 meter that increases the rate of return on the power they generate, and evaluated their power consumption and took steps to reduce it. In the first six months of operation, St. Anselm’s reduced their electric bill from $1,600 to $125 and their carbon dioxide load into the environment by approximately 9,500 pounds. Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas believed to be primarily responsible for global warming.

St. Edmund’s, Pacifica
Lynn Adams
Philip R. Matthews

Deborah Nagle-Burks did a terrific job of planning and organizing an Oil Spill Healing Ceremony, which was greatly appreciated by the community members who were able to attend. St. Edmards is also assisting a community wide effort in Pacifica for Earth Day (April 19th, 2008) to rid the area of litter; clean the beaches, streets, cliffs and creeks; and unite community groups, volunteers and businesses in making our city a better place to live. It will be a terrific event expected to mobilize nearly 1000 volunteers and dozens of businesses for a day of action for Earth Day. This event is in its 4th year and is being documented as a model for other communities. Our local community television station has created a documentary of the first 3 years. In 2006 they won two Western Alliance Video Excellence (WAVE) Awards and their Earth Day 2007 documentary won another WAVE award for Programs That Made a Difference. This kind of event can mobilize others to take action in their home and community and this can help to make the world a better place.

St. John’s, Clayton
Jennifer Rice

St. John’s has a lovely recycling tradition. Behind their sanctuary is a wooden bird feeder, and after worship two young acolytes take any bread left over from the Eucharist, and, after reading a specially-written prayer, place it in the bird feeder. Within a short time birds, mostly white-crowned and gold-crowned sparrows, come down to share in the gift. They hope to start a program of visits to local places of natural beauty this spring, including short hikes and picnics that their older members and children will be able to join.

St. Paul’s, Walnut Creek
Sue Phelan

St. Paul’s congregation has increased kitchen waste composting and increased recycling of cardboard, paper, glass and plastic. In addition (and this is a biggie), they have installed solar panels that will provide the energy needed for the Church, Chapel, Parish Hall, office wing and classroom wing. (See the story on page 6 for more about St. Paul’s solar panel installation and environmental projects.)
Environmental Roundup

Let the Son Shine In

By Pat Smith

The title of the latest annual report at St. Paul’s, Walnut Creek, was “Let the Son Shine In.” On December 3, 2006, in her first sermon as the new rector, the Rev. M. Sylvia O. Vasquez said that she wanted St. Paul’s to be the greenest church in Walnut Creek. Not yet used to the sense of humor of her new congregation, Vasquez got a good laugh the following Sunday when many of St. Paul’s membership wore green at the 9:30 a.m. service.

Solar panels installed at St. Paul’s, Walnut Creek, will provide clean power for 30 years and save the church money on power bills.

All kidding aside, the congregation of St. Paul’s has taken “greening” to heart. When Vasquez came to St. Paul’s, paper, cell phone, and ink and laser cartridge recycling programs were already in place. In March 2007, The Epistle, St. Paul’s monthly newsletter, went online. In addition to distributing St. Paul’s news to the world, placing the newsletter online reduced printing and papers costs, office labor costs for folding and labeling, and postage costs, as well as reducing the time it took for the newsletter to reach the congregation via bulk mail. By the end of 2007, St. Paul’s mailing costs were $1,000 below budget, thanks mostly to placing the newsletter online. Before the online conversion, the average monthly paper usage was 2,000 sheets of paper; afterward the monthly paper usage was reduced to 320 sheets to print copies for members who do not have access to a computer. In the course of a 12-month period, the paper reduction totals over 20,000 sheets or 40 reams of paper.

The idea of exploring solar energy at St. Paul’s began in early 2007 and an Environmental Committee was formed. Possibility became reality when it was determined that a solar power system would pay for itself through reductions in the current church electric bills and with available state incentives and federal tax credits for solar energy systems. When installed, the system is expected to provide clean power to St. Paul’s for the next 30 years and it will also exempt St. Paul’s from future utility power cost increases.

A company was formed by a group of members of St. Paul’s to own and operate the solar power system. The company also has the authority to sell the power generated by the system. PG&E approved the system and flipped the switch to solar power on February 27, 2008. The full sized system will provide most of the current electricity use at St. Paul’s and it will provide peak power of about 25 kilowatts. Approximately 180 individual solar panels have been installed with several inverters to convert the DC current into AC current making it usable at the church.

On sunny days, the system will generate the electricity used at St. Paul’s and any excess will be used by PG&E for their other customers; St. Paul’s will receive credit for this excess power provided. During the night or when not enough power is generated, electricity from PG&E will still be used, but the credits obtained will pay for this additional power. At current electrical utility rates, it is expected St. Paul’s will save $7,000 per year and more if rates increase in the future.

Seminarians and staff at Church Divinity School of the Pacific replaced lawns with low water-use plants as part of the school’s new Greening Project. During Lent, visual displays helped them consider water use in light of their baptismal vows.

CDSP Goes Green

By Hoang-Anh Tran

In Spring 2007, a group of seminarians, faculty and staff members at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP) in Berkeley joined the Green Seminary Initiative by taking small steps toward sustainability. The efforts of the Greening Project focused on educating the community about the environmental impacts of living. Each activity, large or small, springs from our desire to bridge theological education and mindful stewardship of earth’s ecological resources. Early steps included purchasing recycled paper for printing, carrying metallic water bottles in lieu of plastic bottles, and re-using ceramic mugs versus paper cups in the dining hall.

These small, basic steps were successful and grew. Recycling bins were donated for classrooms and offices. In order to reduce irrigation water usage, community members gave time and resources to plan a way to replace lawns and dead strips with Mediterranean-zone plants that need next to no water. Indigenous plants were donated for the “makeover” of an arid strip of land on campus; students, faculty and staff grabbed shovels to dig holes for the plants – more than 200 plants were set in place on one fall morning.

The Greening Project at CDSP continued efforts to bring greater attentiveness and good stewardship. As the days of Lent grow warmer, the CDSP community continues to think about the very real and spiritual thirst of all people — whether in seminary, in parishes, or in the larger human community — and about the preservation and renewal of God’s creation. With each act, the Greening Project gains momentum, incorporating multiple facets of CDSP’s academic and spiritual life in the development of a sustainable future.

For more information, visit the Greening Project (@ CDSP at www.greeningcdsp.edu)

Hoang-Anh Tran is the executive administrative assistant to the president and dean of Church Divinity School of the Pacific and member of the Greening Project.
On February 27–29, Diocesan Council had a working retreat at Bishop’s Ranch. While on the retreat, Ranch Director Sean Swift led members of Council on a guided tour through the William and Mary Swing Hospitality Pavilion. The Swing Pavilion has been built to use a minimum amount of energy and to maximize the function of its space. The members of council are as follows. Alameda Deanery: Howard Bolton, Mary Louise Hintz, Dianne Smith. Contra Costa Deanery: Bob Anderson, Gary Ost, Shelton Ensley. Marin Deanery: Ruth Baney, Rob Gieselmann, Kathy Ferrando. Peninsula Deanery: Karen Swanson, Torrie McAllister, Rob Keim. San Francisco Deanery: Tim Smith (President), Roulhac Austin, Bente Carter. Southern Alameda: Teri Minnis, Carol Cook, Melissa Ridlon.

On February 13–16, the Episcopal Urban Caucus held its 2008 Assembly at the Oakland Airport Hilton. Under the theme “The Road to Peace,” progressive activists from around The Episcopal Church gathered to network, listen to speeches, and attend workshops on immigration issues, racism, a moratorium of the death penalty, legal services for prisoners with children, community organizing, and San Francisco’s night ministry. Attendees also visited organizations working with youth and those living in poverty. Sister Pamela Clare (SSF, shown speaking) was chair for the 2008 Assembly.

During the Episcopal Urban Caucus 2008 Assembly, the Episcopal Peace Fellowship sponsored a luncheon on Thursday, February 14, that featured speaker Ethan Vesely-Flad of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR). Vesely-Flad told those in attendance that the Episcopal Peace Fellowship was one of the oldest members of FOR, and he gave a remarkable history of the work for justice and peace in The Episcopal Church and FOR.

On February 24, 2008, the last of the regional Visioning Days was held at St. Paul’s, Oakland. This series of events that brought people together to discern where God is calling us as a diocese. Bishop Marc addressed each event, then participants gathered in small groups to consider what the Diocese of California might look like as a “Beloved Community,” and what is needed to build such a community. Bishop Marc will report on what we have learned from one another in his address to the Special Convention at Grace Cathedral on May 10, 2008. On February 27–29, Diocesan Council had a working retreat at Bishop’s Ranch. While on the retreat, Ranch Director Sean Swift led members of Council on a guided tour through the William and Mary Swing Hospitality Pavilion. The Swing Pavilion has been built to use a minimum amount of energy and to maximize the function of its space. The members of council are as follows. Alameda Deanery: Howard Bolton, Mary Louise Hintz, Dianne Smith. Contra Costa Deanery: Bob Anderson, Gary Ost, Shelton Ensley. Marin Deanery: Ruth Baney, Rob Gieselmann, Kathy Ferrando. Peninsula Deanery: Karen Swanson, Torrie McAllister, Rob Keim. San Francisco Deanery: Tim Smith (President), Roulhac Austin, Bente Carter. Southern Alameda: Teri Minnis, Carol Cook, Melissa Ridlon.

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Environmental Theology Books that Matter

By Whitney Bauman

In the Beginning...Creativity? by Gordon Kaufman (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2004)

Living from the Center: Spirituality in an Age of Consumerism by Jay McDaniel (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000)


Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization, and World Religions by Rosemary Ruether (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005)

Theology That Matters: Ecology, Economics and God is the title of a new edited volume addressing the relevance of theology for environmental ethics or “why” theology matters to our contemporary ecological crises. In a clever double use of the term, it also addresses how theologies help “matter” the world, that is, how our theologies and spiritualities take place in the world around us. At a time when we are faced with such daunting problems as global climate change, I think it is important that we pay attention to how theologies “matter” in both senses of the word. Below are a few recently published books that might help us to understand how our Christian beliefs and spirituality can matter in positive ways for the future of life on the planet.

As mentioned, perhaps no issue is more relevant to us today and more challenging to “religion as usual” than the issue of global climate change. What does it mean to “hope for a better future” when we know that our eco-systems will inevitably change as a result of human-forced climate alteration? Sally McFague’s new book, A New Climate for Theology: God, the World, and Global Warming is an essential guide for Christians trying to address the despair that we feel in the face of global climate change. Perhaps the silver lining in climate change is that the long-held assumption of human exceptionalism in Christian thought, or thinking that humans are somehow apart from the rest of the natural world, is now laid to rest. If nothing else, climate change tells us that we are a part of the rest of the natural world. Perhaps we can find healthier ways to live within the planet based upon this relational understanding of what it means to be human.

Another huge issue facing us all (whether Christian or not) is the process of globalization. What is the process of globalizing free-market economics doing to the face of the planet and to the faces of the many different peoples that are a part of the planet? What is a religious and spiritual response to the detrimental aspects of globalization like growing economic inequity and environmental injustices? Rosemary Radford Ruether’s recent book, Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization, and World Religions, addresses these issues. She discusses the awakening of the world religions to the interconnected issues surrounding social injustice, gender discrimination, economic inequities, and environmental degradation. Any reader that thinks “the environment” is merely one issue among many will be surprised at how “the environment” here becomes the context for justice on the planet.

An important book that challenges the “manager” model of what it means to be human is Carolyn Merchant’s recent book, Re-Inventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture. Unlike the rest of the authors mentioned, Merchant is not a religious scholar, but rather an environmental historian. She traces the “environmental history” of the “myth of Eden” and the corresponding myth that humans have dominion over the earth. In the end, she posits that human beings are partners with the rest of the natural world. This partnership ethic challenges the notion that human beings hold power over the whole earth by giving life and agency back to the rest of the natural world. In this sense, we must work with earth-others rather than for them.

Related to global climate change and globalization, especially in this country, is the issue of “consumerism” or the “consumer culture.” Contemporary humans, especially those of us in rich countries, are consuming the earth’s resources more rapidly than at any other time in earth’s history, thereby edging out other species and the poor. In his book, Living from the Center: Spirituality in an Age of Consumerism, Jay McDaniel lays out the “religion” of the consumer culture and offers a counter-spirituality of resistance to consumerism. This challenges, again, the notion that humans are exceptional to the rest of the natural world and that we are somehow “managers” or “kings” of all other life on earth.

Last, but not least, one of the challenges for contemporary Christian theologies that are concerned about the state of this planet we call home is the persistent belief in a transcendent, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipotent personal deity. If such a deity exists, then that deity surely will save us? If not, is that deity then evil? How do ecological and social evils persist in the world that was apparently created “good?” Though many, including evangelical environmentalists, re-think the relationship of this personal God to humanity and to the rest of the world, other theologians argue that we need new ways of thinking about “God” in the context of the 14 billion year-old cosmos that we live in and the 4.5 billion year-old planet that we are a part of. One such re-thinking is found in Gordon Kaufman’s recent book, In the Beginning... Creativity?. In this book, Kaufman re-images God as the “creativity” of the process of cosmic, planetary, and human evolution. In other words, God becomes the creative mystery of life that allows us to live in new ways and allows for the emergence of new, diverse life forms.

Though many of us will not or cannot go as far as some of the people I have mentioned above, I hope that we can all agree that we need to go farther than where we are at the present. If we continue to live “as if” the planet is not our real home, “as if” there is a God that will save us, “as if” globalization is an inevitable process, and “as if” technology will somehow save us from the problems of global climate change, then I think we are in for a big shock. What would happen if we began to live “as if” we are a part of and partners with the rest of the natural world, “as if” this planet was our only home, “as if” other life forms have intrinsic value, and “as if” the cries of the poor were more important than the economic bottom line? Is this not what it means to live in the footsteps of the founder of our religion, to be Christ-like? Though cliché, I think the Evangelical slogan “What would Jesus do?” is an important question for those who profess to be Christians, within the context of a planet in peril.

Spend July 5 at The Bishop’s Ranch

By Judy Harris

July 5 will be a very special day for the diocese at The Bishop’s Ranch. Bishop Marc Andrus and Bishop William Swing will be on hand for the formal dedication of the new William and Mary Swing Hospitality Pavilion.

Dedication of the Pavilion is the culmination of a $4 million construction project at the Ranch. The centerpiece of this project is the 4,000 sq. ft. meeting facility that addresses the long recognized need at the Ranch to accommodate diocesan and parish groups needing larger meeting or activity space. Construction is almost complete — only finishing details remain — and the Pavilion is expected to be available for use sometime this spring.

The walls of the building are constructed with rice straw bales and plastered on the exterior with lime plaster and on the interior with earth plaster made from Ranch soil. Low profile solar panels lining the roof are among many other “green” features of the building. Celestory windows flood the roomy interior with natural light, creating a beautiful space that lends itself to imaginative use. An expansive porch and plaza link the building to the Refectory. A new connecting driveway and parking lot is expected to be available by May.

The program will start on July 5 with the formal dedication of the Swing Pavilion. Please plan to bring a picnic lunch to enjoy on the lawns of the Ranch following the dedication. Afternoon activities will include tours of the new facility and the Ranch, entertainment, and special activities for children. Raffle tickets are being sold for a beautiful Afghan and quilt that were donated to the Ranch — the drawings for the winners will be held that afternoon.

Although construction on the Pavilion is nearing completion and over 90% of the project funds have been raised, we still have about $270,000 in additional funding to raise. We encourage your donations for this building that will benefit the diocese for years to come.

Additional details on this event will be available in May and June. Information will appear in DioBytes, will be mailed to parishes, and will be found on the Ranch’s website (www.bishopsranch.org).

On February 21, 2008, the Rev. Dr. Naim Ateek (left), Executive Director of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem (sabeel.org), met with Bishop Marc Andrus at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley. Later that evening, Ateek addressed the seminary community in a conversation titled “Peace and Justice: The Conflict Over Palestine.” In their meeting, Andrus promised support of Sabeel. Ateek and Andrus were joined by the Rev. Richard Toll, Chair of Friends of Sabeel — North America (fosna.org).

Contemporary Byzantine Icons

by Betsy Porter, photography by Richard Anderson

On display through April 11
(Pictured icon “Christ Emmanuel”)

Synchronicity: A Process of Letting Go

by Lisa Thorpe

On display April 18 through July 25
**A New Look at Stewardship**

**By Sally Bingham**

Sometimes it is difficult discarding old ideas and fully embracing new ones, so if you read this and respond "WHAT?!" that’s OK, because real change doesn’t happen overnight. But believe me, when it happens, there is no going back.

I am talking about stewardship and taking a new look at its meaning. When we hear the word stewardship in our parishes, most of us assume it has a negative implication — that it’s a kind of “burden” or obligation to care for something. Historically the definition that is intricately threaded into the Episcopal tradition means giving money. This nearly always translates to an annual event celebrated by most churches in the fall, called Stewardship Sunday. We all know that we will be asked to reach deep into our pockets to make a handsome pledge for the financial care of our facility. Most of us also know the importance of that deep reach. Our facilities have to function comfortably with roofs that don’t leak, with heat in the winter, with cooling in the summer. We need good lighting so we can read the bulletins. We need kitchens and bathrooms that are clean and modern, and many other things that make going to church a pleasant and comfortable experience. Our churches have an obligation to the seed of the community as well. Plus, we have many community outreach ministries. All of these things require money.

At these events, we talk about spending money, but what we don’t talk about is saving money. We hear about how we need to give lots to be spent on keeping the church “healthy.” But, and here’s the new idea, what if the focus on Stewardship Sunday became conservation: less spending, and thus, less need for money? One way to look at stewardship might be finding ways to reduce maintenance costs. I am not suggesting less care, or that we let our churches get run down, but rather stewardship in the deepest sense of the word: stewardship that serves not only the church itself (saving cost on energy), but the wider community (saving Creation by putting less pollution into the atmosphere).

How would you react to your rector if he or she stood before you on Stewardship Sunday and said, “Folks, we only need about three quarters of the money we needed last year. We have purchased a new energy efficient refrigerator, replaced all of our lighting with compact fluorescents, turned off the pilot lights on the stove, put sensors in the bathrooms, and we have solar on the parish roof. We are saving $7,000 a year in energy costs and we are helping to save Creation. You can all do this in your homes, too.” You might respond with, “I am proud to be a member of this parish.” Or you might think, “This is too good to be true!”

It is true. Just ask the congregations in our diocese that have solar on their roofs (St. Anselm’s, Lafayette, and St. Paul’s, Walnut Creek). These creative, adventurous parishes are serving as examples to the community and being true stewards of their facility and finances. Nor are they spending money unnecessarily. By practicing conservation and efficiency, they are stewards of Creation. They are not putting unnecessary carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere, emissions that are causing the global climate temperature to rise at a more rapid rate than the science predicted just a few years ago. This stewardship through conservation is helping the church facility AND helping to save Creation.

If we are the stewards of Creation which I believe God calls us to be, we have an obligation to do all we can with our time and talents to protect what God called “good”. There is no better, more important place to start paying attention to that call than in our own buildings. We serve as examples to the community; we carry a moral authority that the local bus terminal doesn’t have, even if it too, has solar on the roof. If we, God’s children, don’t protect Creation, how can we expect others to? Let’s take a new look at stewardship: appreciate its full meaning including conservation of everything including energy, paper, material goods, water AND money.

**Vanessa Yee** is a 15-year-old participant in the Sunday morning youth program at Christ Church, Alameda, as well as an acolyte and a recent confirmant. She is an assistant music teacher for pre-school through 5th grade is very active in Habitat for Humanity in Alameda.
**Diocesan Calendar**

**April/May**

**Tuesday, April 1**
- DYYA Commission Meeting, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

**Thursday, April 3**
- Domestic Violence Awareness Training, San Francisco General Hospital, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

**Saturday, April 5**
- Young Adult Take Action Day, Marin Islands National Wildlife Refuge, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Episcopal Charities Night of Light, Four Seasons Hotel, San Francisco 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.

**Sunday, April 6**
- Bishop’s Visitations: St. Aidan’s, Bolinas; Christ Church, Sausalito

**Thursday, April 10**
- Clergy Deployment Workshop and Lunch, Dio House, 12 p.m. to 2 p.m.

**Friday, April 11**
- Anti-racism Training, St. Stephen’s, Orinda (ends April 12, 5 p.m.), 9 a.m.

**Saturday, April 12**
- Requiem for the Rev. S. Ivan Ramirez, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, 4 p.m.

**Sunday, April 13**
- Bishop’s Visitation: Good Shepherd, Belmont; St. Mark’s, Palo Alto

**Tuesday, April 15**
- Justice, Peace and Integrity Commission Working Group, Dio House, 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

**Friday, April 18**
- Happening XXV, Marin Headlands Institute, Sausalito, 5:30 p.m. (ends April 20, 6 p.m.)

**Sunday, April 20**
- Bishop’s Visitations: St. John’s, Clayton

**Thursday, April 24**
- Gallery 1055 Opening, Lisa Thorpe, Wabisabi Monoprints

**Saturday, April 26**
- Youth Take Action Day, Santa Venetia Wetlands, San Rafael, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

**Sunday, April 27**
- Bishop’s Visitations: Holy Cross, Castro Valley

**Sunday, May 4**
- Bishop’s Visitations: Holy Cross, Castro Valley

**Sunday, May 10**
- Special Convention, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Sunday, May 11, Pentecost**
- Bishop’s Visitations: Grace Cathedral, San Francisco

**Wednesday, May 14**
- Vicar’s Gathering, Dio House, 12 p.m. to 2 p.m.

**Saturday, May 17**
- General Confirmation, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Sunday, May 18**
- School for Deacons Graduation, School for Deacons, Berkeley, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

**Monday, May 26, Memorial Day**
- Dio House closed

See the diocesan calendar at www.diocal.org for more.

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**Reporting to the Land**

*By Julia McCray-Goldsmith, Faith Formation Coordinator*

Educational visionary Parker J. Palmer tells of a man who had worked for a decade in the US Department of Agriculture after farming for 25 years in northeastern Iowa. He was reviewing a proposal related to the preservation of Midwestern topsoil, which is being depleted at a rapid rate by agricultural practices that value short-term profits over the well-being of the earth. His “farmer’s heart” knew how the proposal should be handled, but his political instincts warned him that following his heart would result in serious trouble — not least with his immediate superior.

Among trusted friends, he confessed that he needed to follow his farmer’s heart. One asked him, “How will you deal with your boss, given his opposition to what you intend to do?”

“It won’t be easy,” replied this farmer-turned-bureaucrat. “But [you’ve helped me remember] something important: I don’t report to my boss. I report to the land.”

The ecology of ministry — that is, the life-giving interdependence of ourselves and the communities we minister within — requires that we, too, “report to the land.” However each of us may understand what nurtures our commitment to Christ, recognizing and remaining true to that fertile soil is at the heart of any sustainable practice of ministry. With this in mind, I asked some Diocese of California educators who they “report” to.

“I report to the children,” says St. Paul’s Episcopal School chaplain Carol Luther. “Not only have the children called me to the vocation of school chaplaincy, but they have also been prophetic critics of what passes for ‘adult’ in our world. Jesus said, ‘Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.’ (Mark 10:15) Children have taught me that they are not blank slates awaiting the imposition of outside values, but fully formed spiritual beings, awaiting one who will hear their questions with the seriousness that great questions deserve.”

A few miles away at St. John’s Episcopal Church in the Oakland hills, John McCray-Goldsmith sits on the floor amidst a group of children, alternately playing guitar and playing with the lovingly-crafted manipulatives that illustrate biblical storytelling in the Godly Play fashion. “I report to the arc of history that bends towards inclusion,” says John, referencing Dr. Martin Luther King’s 1968 speech at Washington National Cathedral. “When the kids are grown and think back on the experiences that formed them, I want them to remember that they had space to explore the Christian tradition without any answers predetermined for them.”

Carol echoes this respect for children’s innate capacity for spiritual insight. “Even when they are being silly, children are always dancing with wisdom. But they can’t always internalize their own genius. For that they need adult guides, I report to the children, and in becoming a child under God, am finally beginning to understand what it means to be a seeker of spiritual maturity.”

Myself, I report to the communion of saints. I feel their witness and their presence — all that they gave for love of Christ — embodied in the stories and traditions we share with each other in educational ministries ranging from Godly Play to Education for Ministry. Even the apparently pragmatic training programs the Diocese of California offers for Safeguarding God’s Children, or for vestry members or stewardship leaders, give homage to those foremothers and forefathers who insisted that justice, courage and generosity are our birthright and our responsibility.

“For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,” wrote the apostle Paul in his letter to the Church in Corinth — and in so many other letters where he repeatedly emphasized the historical and communal continuity of the gospel. And the fact that, well, it’s never about any one of us. When we teach, we report to the saints and the apostles, we report the children, and we report to the arc of history that unites them. All of them — and all of us — are rooted in the soil of an ancient landscape of story that continues to be as fruitful as our common love for it. ♦
By Sylvia Vásquez

On January 6, armed with 24 bags of supplies, many questions, and what we hoped were smiles of confidence, thirteen members of St. Paul's, Walnut Creek, left for a one-week mission trip to Honduras. This is a week that was to touch our hearts and remain in our minds. ... that has been literally carved from the steep rocky hillside of the village of Villanueva, a suburb of Tegucigalpa.

Led by our rector, the Rev. Sylvia Vásquez, we had planned this trip for nearly a year. Rev. Sylvia has made this trip for eleven years and when she came to St. Paul’s, she asked that we make this yearly visit one of our ministries.

The goals of the trip were to build a home for a family, all thirteen of whom are members of St. John Evangelista, to help the Ladies’ Sewing Cooperative with their craft, to bring the message of peace down the road, and to support an education and nutrition program that has been established through the boarding school in the area.

The Church of San Juan Evangelista was built with the help of prior mission trips. Its members are the people of Villanueva, an impoverished settlement about 10 miles west of Tegucigalpa. The church stands on the edge of the town with the people of the town looking up at the church and feeling proud and grateful. The church is a place where people gather and pray, and the altar is a place where people stand and pray.

The trip was organized by a group of volunteers who worked hard to make sure that the trip was successful. The group included people from St. Paul’s as well as people from other churches in the area.

Planning for this trip was extensive. We raised enough money to pay for the building of the home, for materials for the sewing cooperative and children’s programs, and to help with the cost of the lunch program. Our fundraising events included the raffle of a beautiful quilt made and donated by a church member.

The St. Paul’s members who traveled to Honduras were: front: Mike Siebert, Anne Droese (St. Giles-Moraga), Dave Mattern, Cissy Thornhill, Mike Yale; back: Gretchen Brown, Laura Cichon, Carey Griswold, Dan Kowalski, Dan Van Doren, Betsy West, Dave Hambourne, Anne Dianese. (It was a fun team.)

The trip was a memorable one, and we hope to have many more.

Donate it to Episcopalian Charities!