Convention 2008

by Monica Burden

During the week of October 13, the Diocese of California engaged in convention activities, concluding with the business meeting on Saturday, October 18. Convention week opened with regional events on Monday and Wednesday evening, led by the Rt. Rev. Marc Handley Andrus, bishop of California, the Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, assistant bishop of California, and the Rt. Rev. Naudal Alves Gomes, the bishop of Curitiba, Brazil, companion diocese to the Diocese of California. On Friday, a Eucharist service was held at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, followed by a dance party on the cathedral’s plaza. On Saturday, over 400 clergy and lay delegates gathered at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco for Morning Prayer and an address by Andrus. The participants then moved downstairs to Gresham Hall where they voted on committee members, changes to the constitution and canons, and a total of seven resolutions.

The regional events at the beginning of the week featured a conversation with the gathered bishops about their experiences at the Lambeth Conference, then Gomes, his wife Carmen Regina, and his sister Carmem Etel spoke about their experiences at the Lambeth Conference, of the week featured a conversation.

The following is the first part of the address delivered by the Rt. Rev. Marc Handley Andrus on Saturday, October 18. See www.dioccal.org/convention for the full text.

Bishop’s address to convention: Healing all the way down

Can you guess what feast day it is? Saint Luke’s. I’ve given you lots of clues. It is the Feast of Saint Luke, a gospeller and a physician, and I couldn’t think of a better feast that God could have given us today as we gather in convention for the Diocese of California. It came to me as I was contemplating and praying about being with you and speaking to this theme in the times in which we live. I was thinking of an image that might be evocative, that might pull together these ideas of healing that the world and humanity needs so greatly at this moment, and this image came to me that’s on the front of your morning prayer bulletin — “Compassion Mandala” by Robert Lentz. Interestingly, the day that this came to me (and this probably comes to you under the category of praying for parking spaces and so on) but on that very day, John Butcher, our beloved brother, sent me an early birthday card and it was with this image. I thought all right, confirmation.

This idea of compassion, the compassion mandala, the Christ figure, the cosmic Christ bending over the whole of creation and praying the world, holding it together, bringing it together in his love, is one that is evoked in this gospel in so many ways. St. Luke is called a physician not primarily because of the little clues that people have put together about what his calling in life might have been, but rather it seems to be for the very character of the Gospel that he produced. It is about healing, healing at every level of existence. It is not only personalistic, it is healing at institutional levels, it is healing at community levels, it is healing of our earth. All of these are implicated in every act of healing that is done. And this is announced when Jesus announces his own ministry in the fourth chapter of Luke’s Gospel, as we heard read this morning.

“The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

And everything is implicated. Every level of existence is implicated in this proclamation that Jesus makes in Luke’s Gospel. The captives being spoken to, those who need the Lord’s favor in a year’s time, a jubilee time, all of these are all the levels and kinds of blindness, all the kinds of captives that we can imagine. All are brought to bear in the healing act of Christ on the earth and in every human life, in every life that is on the earth.

This has come very powerfully to me in this last year in that God has given me a doorway because of my position that you called me to as bishop of the Diocese of California with St. Luke’s Hospital. St. Luke’s Hospital was slated to be closed in two years. A great effort at the level of community organizing protests in our city and more widely was raised at the prospect of the hospital’s closure. What I’ve learned by being involved in the process to save St. Luke’s is how complex this healing under the name of St. Luke really is. Individual doctors and nurses and staffs, and the CPMC management, the labor leaders, who are usually in tension with CPMC and battling with them, city officials, the public health department, all these people—I learned as I thought about it and worked with these amazing people on every side, that all of them are involved in every act of

2009 and 2010 convention dates

In 2010, the annual convention for the Diocese of California is moving to February, on a date to be determined. An interim half-day convention will be held in October 2009 to deal with certain canonical resolutions and to receive the report of the Deanery Study Taskforce. This change will allow for a more orderly budget process and a more orderly planning process for our various commissions and ministries. Please watch DioBytes and Pacific Church News for further information. February 2010 convention activities will include special guests, regional activities in the evenings the week of convention, a Friday evening Eucharist, and a day of business on Saturday.
Healing all the way down

Healing: From page 1

numbers of stories that occur nowhere else, numbers of parables that occur nowhere else but in Luke’s Gospel. But one story in Luke’s Gospel seems to me to proclaim this message of healing in all its complexity and its clarity to us, and has done through the ages. And that is the parable we normally call that of the Prodigal Son or Loving Father, or the Absent Mother.

This is Bernard Brandon Scott’s translation and reconstruction in the phenomenal way of this parable, and he does call his chapter “I remember Mama.”

A Man Had Two Sons

A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to the father, “Father, give me the portion of your substance that falls to my share.” And he divided among them his living. And after many days, gathering together everything, the younger son departed into a far country and there he squandered his substance in wild living. When he had spent everything, there happened a great famine throughout that country and that one began to fall short. And going, he attached himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into (the) fields to feed his pigs and (that one) longed to feed his belly from the carob beans which the pigs were eating, and no one gave them to him. Coming to himself, he said, “How many of my father’s hired hands abroad in bread, but I in famine here have been filled. And rising up, I will go to my father and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, no longer am I worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired hands.’”

And rising up, he came to his father. While he was [way] far off, his father saw him and had pity and running he fell upon his neck and kissed him affectionately. Said the son to him, “Father, I have sinned to heaven and before you, no longer am I worthy to be called your son...” Said the father to his slaves, “Quickly, bring out the best robe and clothe him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet, and bring the fattened calf, kill, and eating let us make merry, because this [my] son was dead and lives again, was lost and is found.” And they began to make merry.

There was his son, the elder one, in the field. And as he was coming, he drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing, and calling to one of the boys, he inquired what it might mean. He said to him, “Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has got him back in good health.” He was angry and did not wish to go in; his father coming pleaded with him. Answering he said to his father, “See, how many years have I served you, and never went against your commandment, and never did you give me a goat so that I might make merry with my friends. When this son of yours who ate up your life with harlots came, you killed for him the fattened calf.” He said to him, “Child, you always are with me, and everything that is mine is yours. [To make merry and to rejoice was necessary because this your brother was dead and lives, and being lost is found.]” (Hear Then the Parable, 1989, Fortress Press)

Brothers and sisters, I see in this parable the movement of healing, the

Convention: From page 1

these guests were adopted.

The Rev. Stacey Grossman delivered a report from the Standing Committee. She spoke about the committee’s work on governance review, moving the diocese toward greater transparency and communication through the changes to church policy for the diocese, to provide the
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Saranam, saranam, saranam, which is a Sanskrit word, and it means “I take refuge in the Ultimate.” I take refuge in the altar.

Where will people go to find that refuge as the financial crisis, which seeks its bottom, but which no one sees at this time? And which the pundits who speak about it never tie to the environmental crisis which has come home much more swiftly than we ever imagined it to come home. There is not one crisis besetting the earth at this time; there are at least two. And they are acute, and they are global, and they are local as well. Saranam.

At lunch, there were breakout sessions on Area Ministry, General Convention, and the proposed resolutions and changes to the constitution and canons. Delegates then returned to Gresham Hall to hear the treasurer’s

report and vote on the assessment formula and budget, both of which passed. The

convention then turned its attention to the proposed changes in the constitution and canons, changes made predominantly to clarify the governance changes made at the Special Convention in May. All proposed changes passed, but will not be effective until passed again at the next convention.

Seven resolutions were considered. Four of them presented resolutions to be forwarded to the 76th General Convention in 2009, including a resolution to allow congregations to continue using the 1979 Book of Common Prayer Lectionary with permission from their bishop, a resolution requesting additional support for clergy of
ethnic congregations in the name of clergy wellness, a resolution encouraging support and action on environmental stewardship in US Government policies, and a

resolution supporting scientific integrity in environmental policy. The resolution on the lectionary failed; the other three resolutions passed. Three other resolutions were passed: one expressing opposition to the death penalty; one expressing support for marriage equality and opposition to California’s Proposition 8, and one
calling for an in-depth study of diocesan institutions and their relationship with the diocese.

At the end of the day, there was a special video tribute to the Very Rev. Alan Jones, dean of Grace Cathedral who will retire at the end of January 2009. A courtesy resolution honoring his ministry in the diocese was adopted. The eighth annual Margaret Wosser Award for progress in planned giving was awarded to Clausen House in Oakland, which helps people with developmental disabilities to lead more independent and fulfilling lives. Peter Brooks, development director, accepted the award on behalf of Clausen House. The engaging day concluded with a prayer from Andrus.

Full text of addresses and reports, adopted resolutions, and changes to the constitution and canons can be found at diocla.org/convention.
Where will they go for refuge? Not, brothers and sisters, a mystic refuge that is somewhere else. But will they know to come to you? Will they know to come to our community? And what will they find when they come to us?

They will find a generous way of being Christian. They will find humorous and lovely people whom I have come to love all across this diocese. But let me bring to our consciousness three movements of healing that I think we could strive to develop as we become ever more the Beloved Community, the Body of Christ, this Christ who hovers over the whole of creation, seeking to bring healing to it at every level of its being. These come from John MacQuarrie in his wonderful book that finally came to me by the grace of Rebecca Morehouse called The Concept of Peace (1973, Harper & Row). I never knew John MacQuarrie; we corresponded, we spoke once on the telephone when he died before I could get to know him. And I think the depth to which I have had to delve into his work has been the chance to, and I believe that he brought it to me. The three movements, the theological concepts that have, I think, to do with healing—MacQuarrie says to bring peace, but he uses “peace” in the sense of shalom, as our presiding bishop uses it, that is the wholeness, the completeness the riddle of life, the perfecting or the healing of the whole of creation. And they are these: resurrection, atonement, and grace. I see these elements in this story of the Prodigal, and I believe they together equate to healing. Let me talk a little bit about them to you.

Atonement. MacQuarrie says beautifully that small unities will, in some instances, have to dissolve for the sake of the emergence of larger unities. Small unities that I cherish and that I hold on to, as a greater unity and a greater healing is sought, will have to dissolve. And this was presaged within the Episcopal Church when the Chicago Lambeth Quadrilateral, starting at Grace Church in New York City, was first promulgated. You remember the reason why they put forward the Chicago Lambeth Quadrilateral, which I’m sure you review with regularity, along with its brother the Athanatian Creed. You thought they were in the back of the prayer book for when you were bored. And perhaps that’s the exception. But the reason that the Chicago Lambeth Quadrilateral and William Reed Huntington, the major author of it, put it forth, was not so that Episcopalians and Anglicans more generally would have a superior way to define themselves: “This is who we are. Don’t mess with us.” But rather, was to say these are the bones. These are the bones of our faith. And phone, and he died before I was able to delve into but have never had the chance to, and Rebecca brought it to me. Another cut will be seen in Pacific Church News. Currently, PCN has a huge cost in postage and printing. We plan to reduce that cost a great deal in 2009 while reducing the carbon footprint it takes to get PCN to you. We still plan to get PCN into the hands of every Episcopalian in the diocese, but we are going to use technology to do this better. If you would like to receive PCN in a completely electronic form, please let us know. Send an email to paperless@diocal.org with “Subscribe” in the subject line. Please email us from the address where you would like to receive your electronic copy of PCN. PCN will also be bulk delivered to congregations. We have been told by print-media consultants that this will guarantee more eyes on the paper than simply receiving it mixed in with junk mail in your mailbox. We will be contacting congregations soon to discuss a bulk delivery plan. Finally, if you want to continue receiving PCN in your mailbox, please let us know. It is a higher cost to the diocese and the environment to do so, but we understand that some people need to receive PCN at home. We’re happy to continue that service as needed as well. We will be communicating with congregational communicators and administrators to ensure that we are sending PCN to those who need to receive it at home. This does mean that our partnership with Episcopal Life will be coming to an end. If you want to continue to receive Episcopal Life, you will need to subscribe to it separately. To subscribe to Episcopal Life, look at the subscription information on page 2 of the Pacific Church Life in the middle of this issue of PCN. We hope that the changes to PCN and diocesan communications help us get the word out better. We have developed an amazing network of communicators from within the congregations of the diocese and we will be working ever more closely with them to tell the stories of ministry and justice that our readers expect. If you have any questions about coming changes to communications in the Diocese of California, please feel free to contact me at seanm@diocal.org. ♦
Millenium Development Goals

MDG snapshots in a world gone berserk

A pilgrimage to Ecuador
by Mark Lodico, St. Gregory of Nyssa, San Francisco

Supported by my parish, I had the honor this past summer of volunteering at a wonderfully creative center in Quito, Ecuador, called El Centro del Muchacho. I worked at the Centro as a short-term member of an inspiring community, helping adolescents and children make a better life.

The Centro targets the working poor most of whom have abandoned their farming villages in hopes of a better life in the capital city. Families of eight to 12 people typically live in a one room 10 by 12 foot “apartment.” Due to grossly unsanitary conditions, the infant and child mortality rate is very high among the working poor. Entire families need a lot of training, education, and support to be able to make a better life.

At the center, the children and parents are offered meals — approximately 12,000 meals are served each day. Doctors and dentists serve their demanding health needs and provide basic health education. Job training in baking, auto mechanics, and hair styling enable 100 percent of graduates to secure decent livelihoods and the self-assurance that they will never return to a life of extreme poverty.

Though only boys at first were admitted, now girls are also accepted. Adult literacy classes are offered to their parents and grandparents. Partnerships have been established between the Centro and thousands of temporary and permanent grandparents. Partnerships have been established between the Centro and thousands of temporary and permanent grandparents.

The Centro, as a Catholic community, has added interpersonal and spiritual values to this work of charity: loyalty, prayer, truthfulness; a vision of work as a contribution to family and society, not only as labor; and dedication to the welfare of the family, to name a few. The cycle of extreme poverty, thank God, is broken for graduates and their families.

It was an honor to be even a short-term member of an inspiring team that daily supports people in leaving a life of extreme poverty.

website: www.workingboyscenter.org

One day in the life: Liberia
by Michael Tedrick, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco

Yesterday I came home for lunch and the aroma of chicken cooking in onions and garlic filled the air. “That smells wonderful Mahmah [my cook], and I am starving!” When she turned to me, her startled expression struck at my core. “I am so very sorry Mahmah, that is a horrible expression. I have never known hunger, and I pray to God not to say that ever again.” She stepped closer, and said, “It’s OK Michael, it’s OK.” I knew that it was not OK.

Mahmah has known the pain of not having food in her house, and hiding in the jungle with her family for months, afraid and hungry. Hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children in Liberia go to bed without a meal, and children suffer from malnutrition. Over two million people (80 percent of the population) exist on less than $1 per day, when a bag of rice that will feed a family for 1 month costs more than $30.

website: awanderersjournal.blogspot.com

Eradicating terrible diseases like malaria
by The Rev. Salying Wong, St. Clement’s, Berkeley

Our Sunday School children are marking our Centennial by raising funds to purchase at least 100 anti-malarial nets through the Nothing But Nets campaign. The children are educating the congregation on the devastating effects of this disease, and sharing the good news that it is easy to prevent.

Also, this year, the Outreach Committee hopes to focus on MDG Goal 7: Ensuring environmental sustainability. We are brainstorming now, but we are excited to see where God will lead.

In the recent past we have raised money to purchase arks of animals from Heifer Project International and supported individual entrepreneurial enterprises through KIVA.


Malaria kills someone every 30 seconds
by the Rev. Linda Campbell, St. Alban’s, Albany

St. Alban’s community, led by the teens, has collected over $1,572 to purchase malaria nets. These nets, at $10 per net, are intended for entire families to sleep under at night, when malaria-carrying mosquitoes are most active.

Many individuals from the surrounding community donated to this St. Alban’s effort — and it was featured on KTVU channel 2 news a few weeks ago. We heard quite a few stories from local people about their own bouts with malaria while they were on mission projects and traveling.

website: netsforliferafrica.org (ERD), nothingbutnets.net (UN)
Spotlight on Episcopal Charities

Janice Parkin to lead Episcopal Charities in engaged philanthropy

Episcopal Charities Board Co-President Diane Savage has announced that Janice Parkin will serve as Episcopal Charities’ new Executive Director, beginning November 10. Jan served as Donor Relations and Communications Officer for Church Divinity School of Pacific since 2005, and has previous experience with Episcopal Charities, both as development manager and as volunteer chair for the annual Night of Light gala.

Jan will lead Episcopal Charities (EC) as it implements its new strategic vision, to improve the health and well being of the poorest members of our community. Through engaged philanthropy, Episcopal Charities will focus the financial and human resources of the Episcopal and broader community on the critical issues of education and healthcare. EC will create two community-based impact groups, one focusing on healthcare and the other on education. Each of these groups, which will comprise clergy and lay leaders from the diocese, partner agencies, community leaders, and EC board members, will find and form organizations that make a critical difference in their respective impact area, and make grant recommendations to EC.

EC is currently recruiting members for the healthcare and impact groups. If you are interested in supporting EC’s vision of engaged philanthropy by sharing your expertise, or by learning more about either of these areas, please contact jparkin@episcopalcharities.org.

Episcopal Charities walk-a-thon a brilliant success

By Sally Coates

Brilliant best describes the Episcopal Charities 30th walk-a-thon held on Saturday, October 11, 2008. Brilliant sunny skies, radiant spirits, inspired presentations from the EC partner agencies and parish outreach representatives were the heart of the event as over 200 walkers shared the day-long experience.

The walkers met back at Grace Cathedral for a festive celebration of lunch served by St. Paul’s Church, Walnut Creek, with entertainment provided by Loco Bloco and the seniors from Canon Kip House. Proceeds from the event support the programs and services of Episcopal Charities, which serve Episcopal agencies and parishes that work to break the cycle of hopelessness in our community.

Sandra Day O’Connor preaches at Grace Cathedral

by Pat Smith

May 1984 – The U.S. Supreme Court Building, Washington, DC

I had a week to play tourist in our nation’s capital. On earlier trips, I visited many of the historic buildings and monuments, but this was my first visit to the US Supreme Court Building. Unlike the galleries in the Congress and Senate wings of the US Capitol Building, the public gallery in the U.S. Supreme Court Building is rather small. The guides only allow a limited numbers of visitors to view the proceedings while the court is in session. As I quietly walked into the court’s chamber with my group, there before us, seated at the bench wearing their black robes were the nine Justices of the US Supreme Court including Chief Justice Warren Burger, flanked by Associate Justices: William Brennan, Byron White, Thurgood Marshall, Harry Blackmun, Lewis Powell, William Rehnquist, John Stevens, and the newest member of the court as of Sept. 25, 1981, Sandra Day O’Connor. Our group was only in the chamber for maybe 15 minutes before we were escorted out so the next group could come in to view the proceedings. I don’t remember the subject of the proceedings nor do I remember questions any of the Justices may have asked the attorneys who presented. But I now look back at that moment with historical awe to have been in the same room with those nine Justices.

Sept. 28, 2008 – Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, CA

The Very Rev. Alan Jones hosts The Forum and his guest is retired Associate U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor. Gresham Hall is filled to the brim and I just arrived as the interview was beginning. No black robe this time, no seat at the bench, just a chat between two friends with a room full of people watching.

Although twenty-four years had passed since I had last seen O’Connor in person, time had not taken away the spirit in her voice, the smile on her face, nor the gleam in her eyes (thanks to the telephoto lens on my camera). Whether talking about her concern for the civics education of our children or telling stories about growing up on a ranch in a remote area of Arizona, O’Connor’s passion never waned. She is just as proud of being a member of the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame as being a retired member of the U.S. Supreme Court, especially since she always carries a copy of the US Constitution in her purse. She speaks of the people and the times at the Lazy B Ranch where she grew up with the same respect and compassion and she does for the law.

The Forum hour went by as quickly as those fifteen minutes in the US Supreme Court chamber had gone by 24 years earlier. Fortunately, Grace Cathedral recorded this interview as it does with each Sunday’s Forum and I urge you to visit Grace Cathedral’s website and listen to the Sept. 28 Forum (gracecathedral.org/music/overview/forum) by checking The Forum Archives link. O’Connor also delivered the Sermon at the 11 a.m. service on Sept. 28.

O’Connor and her brother, H. Alan Day, wrote a book titled “Lazy B,” about growing up on a cattle ranch in the American southwest. In addition, O’Connor also wrote The Majesty of the Law, reflections of a Supreme Court Justice. It may have taken the United States 191 years to put a woman on the bench, but the achievement was worth the wait.

PCN5 | November
Around the Diocese

The Bishop’s Ranch honors Lloyd Aubry

by Sarah McGowan

Early this summer, Lloyd Aubry was honored at a gathering of board members, staff, and friends of The Bishop’s Ranch. Aubry has provided decades of leadership to the Ranch during a critical time in its history, joining the board in 1986 and serving as president of the board since 1991. Now Aubry is stepping down as Ranch board president, though he plans to stay involved with Ranch activities. The new president is Nigel Heath of St. John’s, Ross.

Aubry and his wife, Margaret Wade Aubry, are long-time members of St. Paul’s, Burlingame. Aubry served as senior warden and managed facilities at Paul’s, Burlingame. Aubry served as the bishop learned that Aubry owned and managed a mechanical engineering and construction company. At that time, the Ranch was starved for leadership, direction, and institutional viability. Swing suggested that Aubry “enrich his résumé” by joining the newly formed Ranch Board. At the time of Aubry’s retirement as board president, Swing remarked, “To think of this Ranch as it was at that time and to see what the Ranch is today is to realize that some people did an extraordinary job of transformation. Right in the center of those successful and dedicated people has been Lloyd Aubry.”

From the beginning, Aubry provided “get things done” focus and leadership to the Ranch. His inclusive management style and excitement were critical in building a strong board of directors. Aubry’s extensive construction experience was invaluable as he oversaw numerous building projects and guided four major capital campaigns totaling about $8 million. Under his leadership, St. John’s Meeting House, Webb Lodge, Harrison House, and the new Swing Pavilion were constructed; the Qvale Ranch House, St. Stephen’s Youth Village, and the Friary were remodeled and the commercial kitchen was expanded and remodeled. In addition, the driveway was realigned and wheelchair accessible facilities were added to each Ranch building. To say that Aubry was “fiscally prudent” would be an understatement. Aubry worried a great deal about the Ranch projects. He insisted that plans could not proceed until he was certain the Ranch could afford the construction. He leaves an amazing legacy of expanded programs and facilities and a wonderful gift to the 7,000 people who visit the Ranch each year.

Began on the 13th tee of a golf game with the Rt. Rev. William Swing when the bishop learned that Aubry owned and managed a mechanical engineering and construction company. At that time, the Ranch was starved for leadership, direction, and institutional viability. Swing suggested that Aubry “enrich his résumé” by joining the newly formed Ranch Board. At the time of Aubry’s retirement as board president, Swing remarked, “To think of this Ranch as it was at that time and to see what the Ranch is today is to realize that some people did an extraordinary job of transformation. Right in the center of those successful and dedicated people has been Lloyd Aubry.”

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Diocesan Calendar

by Melissa Neefjes Mischak

We… promise to act upon our baptismal vows to raise up, honor and nurture our youth, and to empower them with the knowledge and love of God.

These words are inscribed in gold on the baptismal font wall of Alameda Christ Episcopal Church. They were crafted in love by a number of families who wanted to underscore the importance of children’s and youth ministries for our future. The project began with a humble determination to live up to the standards of our greatest teacher, Jesus Christ. It is in loving Christ and each other that Christian education becomes relational. Christian educators have an awesome calling: to bring biblical stories alive for children and youth and—even more importantly—make them relevant today. This dream is becoming a reality, as I and four other committed Christian educators step forward to answer this call. Roxanne Rhoades, Family Ministry Coordinator at St. Stephen’s Orinda, comments, “I love my job…it allows me to use my gifts and challenges me to grow in my own faith journey. I am a Godly Play Storyteller, Sunday School Scheduler, Bible Milestone Class teacher, Celebration of Communion co-facilitator, Milestone program coordinator, Children’s Chapel storyteller for our preschool, Nursery care coordinator, Curriculum reviewer, Christmas Pageant Coordinator, baker, bulletin board keeper,… and these are just a few of my favorite things.”

Across the Bay at Holy Innocents in San Francisco, Alanna Ryan-Van Antwerpen delights in the spiritual leadership of the children in her care. “One Sunday I observed a 2½-year old child sitting on a stool with her hands folded in a cupped position waiting to be served communion, her parents stood behind her in the same posture. At coffee hour I remarked to her parents how beautiful it was to see the whole family in prayer, waiting to receive the Eucharist. Her mother smiled and said, ‘Our daughter actually was the one who said, ‘Daddy, this is how we wait for the bread,’ and then turned to make sure I was doing the same thing.’”

Laura Dihak Torres serves children’s and youth ministry La Santísima Trinidad, Richmond. “Since 1993 our Lord has been doing the same thing.”

All of us are committed to the faith development of our children and youth—and to yours too! Watch diocesan news for more information about us—our passions and our skills—and the ways we stand ready to serve you. ♦

Diocese of California launches mentor teacher program

We… promise to act upon our baptismal vows to raise up, honor and nurture our youth, and to empower them with the knowledge and love of God.

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Diocesan Calendar

Friday and Saturday, November 7 and 8
• A Healing of Memories Workshop led by Father Michael Lapley, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., the Wright Institute

Saturday, November 8
• General Confirmation, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Thursday and Friday November 27 and 28
• Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving Holiday, Diocesan House closed

Thursday, November 13
• Alameda Deanery Meeting, All Souls’, Berkeley, 7 p.m.

Saturday, November 29
• Retreat in Daily Life

Saturday, December 6
• General Ordination, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday December 24
• Christmas Eve, Diocesan House Closed

Thursday, December 25
• Christmas Day, Diocesan House Closed

Friday, December 26
• Diocesan House Closed

See the diocesan calendar at www.diocal.org for bishops’ visitation schedule and more events.

Music by Heart

A songbook with 85 newly-composed songs, Music by Heart is available at www.allsaintscompany.org
by Julia McCray-Goldsmith

You know the old saw, “if you want to make God laugh, tell her your plans?” Well God has been having a good laugh at my expense the past few weeks.

During pledge season in our congregations I am frequently invited to preach and teach about stewardship and the joy of discovering abundance in returning more money to God, all of which are true for me. But right in the middle of preparing yet another talk about generosity, banks began to fail. And my husband worked for — note the verb tense — Lehman Brothers. Suddenly — with the speed of a hundred headlines — the spirituality of money and the temporality of capital markets came crashing through my front door and I had to rethink everything.

Six weeks into the international financial crisis I can say with certainty that I have been given a great gift. It came with a price tag attached — a rather large one, I’ll confess — but that’s OK because now I know what the lesson is really worth.

If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans. This is what happened to me.

On Sunday September 21 my husband and I — who don’t usually do this kind of thing at home — were glued to the news on Bloomberg dot com, watching the 150-year-old investment worth. John… disappeared.

Imagine the scene. Our financial world suddenly had come unraveled, and John… disappeared. It’s a guy thing, a friend reminded me. That is to say, he went straight back to work for the clients of his bankrupt company (after emptying his office of personal effects of course). He called on every single agency he had worked for — he’s a public finance banker so his clients are municipal and state agencies — and patiently listened to their legitimate anger and fear before telling them “I’m sorry. This is going to be really painful for you, but let me help you figure out how to get out of your contracts with the least possible penalty for your taxpayers.”

So for an entire anxious week, I could barely find my husband, not even by phone. We were both scared, although not always for the same reason. What would happen to the rest of the financial system? How would public works projects be completed? How would we pay our household bills? These are the things we didn’t talk about that week. What did we do instead? This is where kindness came into play. We embraced each other. We silently acknowledged the pain and the stress. We said, “I love you” a lot. John had no idea what he was supposed to do in a bankruptcy — the company had no procedures for that — so my husband did the most ethical thing he could think of. We had no idea how to treat each other in the midst of huge loss, so we were just… kind to each other. Character and kindness. These were the deeply habituated behaviors that guided us in the midst of crisis. Not because we are so great, but because we practice these habits daily, in our marriage and in our church community.

Resolution A135 of the 2003 General Convention encouraged all Episcopalians “to develop a personal spiritual discipline that includes, at the minimum, the holy habits of tithing, daily personal prayer and study, Sabbath time and weekly corporate worship.” Giving, praying, resting, worshipping — these are the holy habits of Christian people — they always have been. And we do them not so much because they are good for the church — although they are — but because they are good for us. I can say with conviction that it was the ordinary daily habits that were our lifeline when things seemed like anything but ordinary.

To deepen the reflection specifically in relation to stewardship, I was reminded that it’s no bad habit to give more of God’s resources back to the One who gave them to us. Because if we find ourselves at the point where we really do have less, we will already know that its OK — that life can be just as full, people just as decent, love just as rich with 90 percent of our income, or even with much less. My greatest regret about living through bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers? I wish we had given away more company stock while it was actually worth something!

Lest I leave anyone worrying too much about my financial situation, I want to assure that our family is fine, if somewhat poorer on paper. John’s public finance practice was bought by a European bank, and he never even had a day off. That may be our next household stewardship challenge — trusting that God has given us enough time to really rest and give thanks. For the kindesses shown to us, and for the kindness we found in ourselves. Tell God my plans? Maybe I’d be better off letting God tell me her plans, perhaps by listening to the words of the prophet Jeremiah —

“Surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes. Jeremiah 29:11-14”

Episcopal Community Services helps nearly 6,000 people each year with comprehensive programs to prevent and end homelessness. ECS services include shelters, supportive housing, senior services, the Skills Center, and the CHEFS program.

Together, we can end homelessness.

Cursillo in the East Bay

Sponsored by members of the English-speaking Cursillo community and in a van provided by the Anglican Cursillo of California, East Bay, eight members of the Latino congregation of Holy Trinity/La Santísima Trinidad, Richmond, departed for Watsonville on Thursday, August 28 to attend a Spanish Cursillo weekend put on in the Diocese of El Camino.

Their priest, Fr. Javier Torres, was spiritual director for the weekend. One of the talks was given by the Rev. John Rawlinson of St. James Santiago, Oakland. The weekend included candidates and team members from as far away as Los Angeles.

The group hopes to hold a Spanish Cursillo weekend in their San Francisco Cursillo Center in the Sunset in the near future.
The Rev. Peter Champion was installed as rector at St. John's, Clayton, on Sunday, October 12.

Rima Vesley-Flad delivered the annual St. Margaret's lecture at Church Divinity School of the Pacific on October 10. Her lecture was titled "Caring with and for people in prison."