



Report Given by the Priest-in-Charge at the Annual Meeting, January 27, 2013

I want to begin by frankly acknowledging that this past year has been marked by considerable turmoil. The main flashpoints were the departures of the Canon Precentor and the Dean, but in truth the issues that have roiled the congregation are broader than mere matters of personnel, and are deeper than the events of the past 12 months. Or of the past 12 years.

In response to the turmoil and the possibilities it creates for reimagining our common life, the Cathedral Chapter engaged a consultant to help the parish develop the skills needed to navigate through difficult times and to open onto the new thing that God has in store for us. This work took a quantum leap at the parish retreat held earlier in January. The Rev. Bill Kondrath and Canon Robin Hammeal-Urban did a wonderful job of creating the conditions for an honest, spirit-filled, difficult, yet joyful encounter with one another and with our God. The real credit, however, goes to the members of the parish who attended. You guys made me proud to be associated with the Cathedral. I know that I caused some consternation when I expressed my dismay in the January *Grapevine* at the harsh tone that has marked so many of the conversations in and around the Cathedral in recent months. Well, I've got to tell you that at the retreat I experienced a spirit of openness and candor coupled with *kindness* that was wondrous to behold. So I know you have it in you.

A second response to this past year's turmoil was the appointment of a priest-in-charge. For the time being, I am he. My responsibilities include:

- helping the congregation catch its breath;
- helping the congregation begin the process of reconciliation here at home, which is a prerequisite to engaging in the larger project of participating with

God in reconciling this broken world of ours;

- leading the parish in an examination of its culture, which is to say the accustomed ways of being and doing and thinking of ourselves, and the ways of interacting that are passed down from generation to generation, all of which shape our imaginations, and sometimes constrain them;
- and finally, spurring the congregation to take a fresh look at what God is already up to in Hartford and its environs, and how we might faithfully participate in that ongoing activity. This includes taking a fresh look at what it means to be a cathedral in this day and age and in our particular context. Doing so will enable us to discern how Christ Church Cathedral on the corner of Church and Main Streets in Hartford can more purposefully further God's mission, and at the same time be a resource to the entire Diocese.

Parish Life

I have been using Sunday announcement time to update the congregation on matters of importance. This is just one of several ways we will be seeking to become more transparent, to invite broad input on issues of concern to the congregation, and to provide explanations for decisions that have been made.

One of my first announcements dealt with stabilizing and supporting our musical program so that the parish as a whole can discern what kind of musical offerings befit the Cathedral parish we are in the process of becoming. To that end, I invited Paul Fletcher to continue as music coordinator for a period of six months at which time the parish leadership will assess where we are in our quest to determine what God would have us be and do. This continues the role

Paul played during the three months before my arrival, first at the behest of Dean Pendleton and then at the behest of Bishop Douglas. I also invited Deniz Uz to continue as our organist for the same period of time. Both are doing a marvelous job and I hope you will join me in expressing our thanks.

I also have reinstated healing prayer on the second Sunday each month after the Prayers of the People and before the Confession. It takes place in the crossing and at the altar rail. Healing prayer in the middle of the service is a liturgical practice that has significant meaning for many in the congregation, while being less meaningful to others and downright baffling to some. This is true of many liturgical practices, but we don't usually question practices once they become routine. However, I bet if we took a poll about the Nicene Creed, for example, parishioners would be all over the map in terms of how attached they are to it and how spiritually uplifting they find it.

It is important to recognize that within the diversity that exists in this congregation are differences in what people find spiritually meaningful. Therefore, to truly live into the *depth* of our *spiritual diversity*, it is important that we not limit ourselves to practices that represent the least common denominator, or that we pursue simply because we have grown accustomed to them. It is important we also incorporate from time to time liturgical practices that we know make some people's hearts soar even if they initially feel strange to others.

Also in the category of recent changes in our parish life, after conferring with several people who were involved in making it happen, I decided to stop the mid-week Eucharist, at least for now. My reasons are simple: often zero, rarely more than three attendees, and it has become

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Priest-in-Charge Report

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increasingly difficult to attract clergy to celebrate. I have not given up on making the Cathedral a place of refuge for people working and living in downtown Hartford. The Leadership Team has begun exploring opening the church at midday, with parishioners on hand to provide hospitality. We have also begun exploring giving tours of the Cathedral and reviving the bell ringers group in hopes that bell ringing might be part of our midday invitation "to come and see."

Who Are the "We"

During Dean Pendleton's leave of absence, Bishop Douglas established an Advisory Group that met with him on a regular basis. This was in response to the Cathedral's peculiar polity, which is a churchy word for organizational structure. The Cathedral's principal governing body is the "Chapter" that meets four times a year and is largely composed of people who do not worship at the Cathedral. At the same time, we have a *Parish* Committee that is elected by the congregation but has little say in how the parish is run. The Advisory Group was an attempt to bridge the gap. It was made up of the Parish committee members, officers of the Chapter, and any other Chapter members who worship regularly at the Cathedral. I have continued to work with that group and have rechristened it the Leadership Team. [See listing of members in this issue of *The Grapevine*.] This new structure allows parish leaders to engage more fully and Chapter leaders to engage more regularly with issues that have a direct impact on parish life.

My final observation about parish life involves the worship service we conduct in Bushnell Park every Saturday. It is important that we all recognize that Church by the Pond is a regular worship service of the Cathedral, just like the 8 and 10 a.m. Sunday services. In saying this, I do not mean to disparage the incredible participation by clergy from other parishes and other denominations. I simply mean to emphasize that what happens on Saturday afternoons in Bushnell Park is not some outreach exercise that some kindly Christian folk provide to the downtrodden as an act of Christian charity. Instead, brothers

and sisters in Christ come together in worship and in fellowship at Church by the Pond just as they do on Church and Main.

Finances and the Budget

The 2013 budget is a maintenance budget based on historical experience that takes account of personnel changes and includes a few reductions in spending. I personally developed the budget with enormous help from the Cathedral Administrator and the Cathedral's bookkeeper. It was not a process of which I am proud and is not a process that should be repeated. Even though we possess the most information and are integral to the process, the budget should *not*, in my view, be developed by clergy and staff. I entered duty on December 1, 2012, and was faced with exigent circumstances. I was not able to generate an initial draft of the budget until the beginning of January. Ideally I would have invited the Finance Committee to be engaged in the process but unfortunately there is no functioning Finance Committee at present.

At my request, the 2013 budget that the Chapter approved is provisional. It will be reviewed at the Chapter's April meeting, and again in July and October. It allows the Chapter to make revisions reflecting changes occasioned by our ongoing discernment of what God is calling us to do and be. It also gives me time, between now and April, to reconstitute the Finance Committee and to develop a budgeting process that is transparent, open and participatory.

We have already taken some baby steps in that direction by, for example, renaming budget lines to more clearly reflect where money comes from or how it is spent. We have disaggregated certain budget lines so that income and expenses are easier to track. For example, instead of having a single "salaries" or "benefits" line for clergy, musicians, administrative staff and support staff, we have presented separate lines for each category. Another simple change is bold-facing income items that are offset by expenses (donations to Church Street Eats is an example) so that the net impact of

program-specific fundraising is clear.

Let me end with something that I should have said at the beginning. I am honored by this opportunity to serve you and to be in relationship with you. Not because this is "The Cathedral." That is of little moment to me. What moves me is the fact that so many of you are working so hard to maintain and transform this old house of God which you love dearly. I am more than hopeful that the future is bright. I know in my bones that God is working a new thing in Christ Church Cathedral, and that we are on the move.

Blessings,
Harlon Dalton

February Calendar

(All events in the Cathedral or Cathedral House unless otherwise noted)

- 2 Women's Global Mission Event 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
- 3 Black History Month Forum 11:30 a.m. with Christopher L. Webber
- 4 Cathedral Crafters 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
- 13 Ash Wednesday Services 8 a.m., noon and 6 p.m.
- 18 Presidents' Day holiday, Cathedral and Office closed

Happy February Birthdays

Victor Brathwaite
David Carlson
Kate Dixon
Terrence Greaves
Wilbert Hales
Sarah Higbie
Dolores Howard
Nancy Jacobs
Heather Jordan-Greaves
Lillian Kezerian
Marnie Mueller
Linda Murray
James Platts
John Rogers
James Romanik
Samuel Scinto
John Spence
Elizabeth Yebram

Welcome to Sunday Bible Discussions

If you can get up early enough on a Sunday, join fellow parishioners for an informal discussion of Bible selections read during the previous week. Or you can read them quickly that morning! Everyone gathers near the Cathedral House auditorium from 9 to 9:45 a.m. Here is the list of readings for February: (These are also listed in each Sunday bulletin.)

For February 3: Joshua 13-14
 For February 10: Joshua 15-24
 For February 17: Judges 1-10
 For February 24: Judges 11-21

Black History Month Forum: Story of a Former Slave

Author and Cathedral friend Christopher L. Webber will present his book *American to the Backbone*, the true story of a fugitive slave who became a leader of the Abolitionist Movement, at a Forum following the 10 a.m. service on Sunday, February 3. Webber, a graduate of Princeton University and the General Theological Seminary, has written a number of books including *Welcome to the Christian Faith*, *Welcome to the Episcopal Church* and *An American Prayer Book*.

American to the Backbone tells about the life of James Pennington who in 1827, at age 19, scared and illiterate, escaped as a slave and became one of the leading voices against slavery prior to the Civil War. Within 10 years he had become a schoolteacher and was ordained to the ministry after studying at Yale. He wrote the first-ever *History of the Colored People* as well as a careful study of the moral basis for civil disobedience which would be echoed many years later by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Pennington served congregations in Long Island and Manhattan and was pastor of the former Talcott Street Church in Hartford. While in Hartford, Pennington took an active part in the effort to repatriate the Amistad captives.

More than a century before Rosa Parks took her famous bus ride, Pennington challenged segregated seating in New York City street cars. He was beaten and arrested, but eventually vindicated when the New York State Supreme Court ordered the cars to be integrated. Webber brings to life a fascinating, forgotten pioneer who helped lay the foundation for the contemporary civil rights movement.

Webber, who lives in Sharon, Connecticut, began his research on the life of Pennington while a "Scholar in Residence" at Christ Church Cathedral. Copies of *American to the Backbone* will be available for purchase and signing by the author at the Forum.

How Christ Church Cathedral Is Organized

The Cathedral Chapter is the legally constituted board of trustees of the Cathedral, and is responsible for all major decisions affecting the Cathedral. Its chairperson is the Bishop of the Diocese. Its members include the Cathedral's Parish Committee and other persons from the Diocese of Connecticut. The Parish Committee represents the interests of the Cathedral congregation. Recently a Leadership Team was formed comprising Cathedral officers and Parish Committee members together with certain Chapter members.

Members of the Leadership Team listed alphabetically and their identification:

June Aziz (Cathedral member, elected to Chapter by Diocesan Convention)

Robert Coykendall (Cathedral member, Chapter Treasurer)

The Rev. Dr. Harlon Dalton (Interim Priest-in-Charge)

The Rev. Donna Downs (Chapter Assistant Treasurer)

Peter Huntsman (Cathedral member, Chapter Chancellor)

Nancy Jacobs (Cathedral member, Parish Committee)

Heather Jordan-Greaves (Cathedral member, elected to Chapter by Diocesan Convention)

Everton McCalla (Cathedral member, Parish Committee)

Kimberly Newport (Cathedral member, Parish Committee)

Peggy Ornell (Cathedral member, Parish Committee)

Melinda Robidoux (Cathedral member, Parish Committee Vice Chair)

Thomas Smith (Cathedral member, elected to Chapter by Diocesan Convention)

The Rev. Linda Spiers (Chapter Secretary)

The Rev. Robert Stocksdale (Chapter Assistant Secretary)

Patricia Wrice (Cathedral member, Parish Committee Chair)

Ash Wednesday Services

The observance of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 13, with services at 8 a.m., noon and 6 p.m. Ashes will be distributed at all services. Ashes will also be distributed at noon in Bushnell Park in downtown Hartford and on Main Street following the noon service. During the 40 days of Lent, Christians traditionally take on positive actions done in Christ's name, or give up something as a reminder of His sufferings. It's also a time to examine our lives and relationships as we prepare for Easter and the new life promised in the Resurrection.

Parish Retreat Brings Out Sharing of Concerns

by Lillian Kezerian

"Are you a kite string or a clothes line? That absurd-sounding question required participants at the Parish Retreat on January 12 to consider how they identify their own personalities and in turn how they think and make decisions. Some chose "kite string" for its sense of freedom, while those who chose "clothesline" appreciated its sense of order. With more questions, we literally scurried back and forth from one personality group to another, not always finding oneself paired with the same people.

The activity was just one way the leaders of the day-long retreat, the Rev. William Kondrath, consultant serving Cathedral leadership, and Robin Hammeal-Urban, Diocesan

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Parish Retreat

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Canon for Mission Integrity and Training, helped bring together the 23 participants—diverse in age, gender, ethnicity, and Cathedral involvement—for a productive session on issues of community and communication facing the Cathedral during a transition period. Bishop Ian Douglas, who had planned to attend, was felled by the flu.

The word “change” was predominant in the discussions and activities, and we all came away with a better understanding of the levels on which change operates. There is the personal level, beliefs and feelings (conscious or unconscious); the interpersonal level, which focuses on behaviors; the institutional level, getting into rules, policies, laws, styles, procedures; and the cultural level, the influence of beauty, truth and what is right. It was easy to see, for example, how one’s personal beliefs can come up against an institutional policy, making the possibility of change not only difficult but also painful.

Bill Kondrath made clear in the beginning that we are on a journey and that not all needs and expectations would be met either that day or in the weeks ahead. But the day’s effort was a positive beginning. We all commented at the end how encouraging the day had been. Some of the participants may find themselves in leadership positions which will call on their experience. But each of us can help the wider Cathedral community better understand that disagreements cannot be allowed to close doors to open and honest discussion, ultimately leading to restoration for the Cathedral.

Church Street Eats: 2012 Report

By Rose Fichera-Eagen

With the caring and able assistance of more than 30 churches and other groups, 12,584 meals were prepared for Church Street Eats. In addition to every weekend, meals were served one Tuesday and one Friday each month. We are grateful for being able to keep up with the growing numbers of men and women who join us every weekend for sandwiches and a tasty soup or mac and cheese. None of this could happen without the efforts of Cathedral folks like Mike O’Brien, Louis Ruddock,

Amber O’Brien, Deacon Don Richey, Monica Best, Silvia Brown, Heather Jordan-Greaves and Betty Jenkins. All assure that the kitchen and dining room run smoothly every week.

The Boutique happens because of a dedicated crew led by Amy Beveridge and Elaine Nelson. On at least 40 Sundays a year, we give out men’s and women’s clothing as well as socks and toiletries. We estimate that we distribute about \$60,000 worth of clothes, including hats and scarves made by members of the congregation, Helen Ross, Lucy Read, Sylvia Brown, Monica Best and Deanna Huntsman. A huge “thank you” to all the anonymous donors who bring in items for us to give to those in need.

There are close to 1,000 volunteers who make our programs what they are today. In addition there are donations of “in kind services” such as a meal or clothing, and cash donations from churches, church groups, other groups and individuals. We have also received grants from churches and local non-profit organizations to meet the needs of people God sends to us.

There are many others who help us week in and week out that I have not mentioned, such as Jordy McBride, Tim Greaves and Theresa Greaves. I thank also the Rev. Tom Beveridge, Deacon Don and Tim Cole for trying to keep me on the straight and narrow. Hard job! Above all, I thank God for prodding us not to forget “His children young and old” as we say thank you and Amen.

For more information on how to help with the ministries described above, contact Rose at h123rfe@att.net or Don at donald.richey@snet.net

Calling All Knitters

By Amy Beveridge

For many years the Cathedral Crafters have knitted prayer shawls for persons in special need. We “knit” our prayers into the soft shawls that wrap around the recipients to offer comfort and the knowledge of the Cathedral community’s support and love.

More than 100 persons have received our prayer shawls. On a recent Sunday, 13 persons in the congregation

requested one of the shawls distributed that day, letting us know that this is a ministry that should continue.

But the number of “official” Crafters has dwindled, and we need more knitters or crocheters. The Crafters welcome anyone who can to join us at Cathedral House on the first Monday of each month (10 a.m.-1:30 p.m.) for a time of knitting and sociability. But we also encourage others to knit or crochet shawls on their own time. We provide the yarn, needles and easy instructions. If you would like to be part of the Prayer Shawl Ministry, please speak to Monica Best, Amy Beveridge, Sylvia Brown or Sheila Green.

Editor’s note: The shawl is very easy to knit—perfect to do while looking at TV!

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