



Christ Church Cathedral Catedral Iglesia de Cristo

The Grapevine

FEBRUARY 2014

From the Vicar's Desk



It is not a secret that I am a dog lover. Actually, Tallulah's bowl and cute little bed in my office quite make that statement. I was already an adult when I had my first dog and I recall my veterinarian friend saying over and over that a moisturized nose and a shiny coat were tangible signs of a healthy dog.

I am aware that this analogy does not do justice to the topic at hand. However, if we are to speak about tangible signs of a healthy church, it does bring up the question of what, if any, are the signs of a healthy congregation.

There is a countless number of books written about the signs of a vital and healthy church. Many theologians have focused their research, expertise and ministries on this topic. Others have invested significant resources studying congregations shown to be successful in sharing the Good News and being relevant to their community and constituencies in this new time and age.

The perception of what makes a church vital can vary from person to person or from denomination to denomination. For many, a church is vital or healthy when it has great financial resources to run its programs, or is numerically large, or has strong youth or outreach

ministries,—all of which I would say are desirable characteristics that facilitate ministry.

It is not simple to measure or determine what makes a church vital but there are basic aspects that reflect a healthy community in tune with the Spirit and its understanding of God's purpose for its existence: **clarity of purpose, spiritual identity, meaningful relationships, engagement with its context, hospitality, and compassion.**

A healthy church has a deep understanding that it does not have a mission of its own but exists to carry on the mission of God. It has clarity of purpose in applying understanding of its role as bridge-builder in the journey of reconciliation between human beings and God through Jesus Christ.

A healthy church nurtures its spirituality through liturgy, prayers, personal and collective devotions. It is a church that balances biblical instruction with personal applications, where its members and leaders seek to glorify God and are connected to God in a profound and significant way.

A healthy church nurtures genuine and meaningful relationships. It exemplifies the word *Ubuntu* to its maximum expression. Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes *Ubuntu* as the essence of being human. *Ubuntu* speaks particularly to the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality—*Ubuntu*—you are known for your generosity.

Tutu continues, "To me *Ubuntu*

is the acceptance of others as parts of the sum total of each of us. It is to say, my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours." We belong in a bundle of life. We say, "A person is a person through other persons."

Therefore relationships and a sense of community are essential in the life of a healthy church—a place and space where we are encouraged to be ourselves (always invited to become Christ-like), unafraid to share our opinions, hopes and dreams, a place where we are encouraged to practice the art of listening, a community where all God's children have a place at the table.

A healthy church is not oblivious to its surroundings; it is connected and engaged in what is happening in its context, in the world around it. It is a church that seeks to identify the needs of others in order to respond faithfully to serve them in the name of God.

A healthy church understands that hospitality, if it is not radical, is irrelevant. It is compassionate, understands that we are all different yet united in Christ who saved us. It is a church that acknowledges the newcomer with a smile, warmth, conversation and genuine Christian love.

It is my desire that our Cathedral Parish continues to grow and be fully healthy in the Spirit—that our spiritual life, shaped by the cherished traditions of our faith and the new spiritual practices of our current time, leads us to a solid relationship with God and one another.

And even more: that those relationships be framed in the knowledge of the love of God; that

(continued on page 2)

From the Vicar's Desk*(continued from front page)*

we fully grasp the fact that each one of us (and those yet to join us) are important and special pieces of the puzzle that forms our identity as a congregation; that each piece is essential to complete the big picture.

It is my hope that through our remarkable outreach ministries, our engaging the world continues to grow and serve people in the Greater Hartford area, and that this work be focused and centered on God and God alone.

I hope we will embrace a radical hospitality approach, allowing ourselves to be flexible to the movement of the Spirit, welcoming the stranger and embracing those who may not think like us. May we allow ourselves to be modeled by our common experiences that define who we are in Christ.

May the Lord continue to inspire, bless and guide us in our common journey.

Faithfully,

Lina+

The Rev. Miguelina Howell, Vicar

Happy February Birthdays

Olga Adams
Joan Bolton
Megan Boyles
Victor Brathwaite
David Carlson
Judith Cooke
Kate Dixon
Carolyn Dorais
Christine Dunn
Anthony Gilkes
Carolyn Gilkes
Terrence Greaves
Gladys Gummer
Wilbert Hales
Sarah Higbie
Dolores Howard
Miguelina Howell
Jake Ingram
Nancy Jacobs
Aidan Johnson
Heather Jordan-Greaves
Lillian Kezerian
Mark McBride
Enuma Mokel
Marnie Mueller
Linda Murray
James Platts
John Rogers
Samuel Scinto
John Spence
Rousseau Taylor
Denis Uz
Mark Warner
Elizabeth Yebram

**Come to the
Hymn Festival Evensong**

Don't miss a special musical event put together by Josh Slater, director of music, on Sunday afternoon, February 9—free and open to all. It begins at 3 p.m. with a master class on engaging congregations in singing. The class will be led by Dr. Stuart Forster, director of music and choir director at Christ Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Though planned mainly for organists and music directors, any interested person is invited to attend.

Then at 4 p.m. there will be an Evensong Service with the choir and music totally based on hymns. You will hear and be able to sing hymns never used on a Sunday morning because they clearly relate to evening and the end of the working day. Evensong is a beautiful service regularly held in English cathedrals. If you've never been to one, this is a great opportunity to participate! Don't miss it!

Absalom Jones Service

On February 16 at 4 p.m. the Cathedral will host the Union of Black Episcopalians of the Diocese of Connecticut in a celebration of the life, work and ministry of the Rev. Absalom Jones, the first African American ordained as a priest of the Episcopal Church in 1804. The preacher will be the Rev. Harlon Dalton, Priest-in-Charge.

**A Thank-You
to the Cathedral Parish**

The following letter, addressed to the Cathedral Scholarship Committee, is meant for the entire congregation:

I want to express how truly thankful I am for your extremely generous scholarship that you recently awarded me. I can't begin to tell you how much it means to me and my family. It is being put to good use for my education and has tremendously eased the financial burdens of the required texts for my classes, apparel and transportation for the eight different clinical rotations required in my program. As you know, I am majoring in Athletic Training (sports medicine) at Temple University, a very competitive and demanding major and career. However, with this scholarship I can acquire what I need to reach new heights as an athletic trainer and go above and beyond the expectations of my peers and professors. Actions speak louder than words, so I want to give you an insight into my status as a student on campus. I have become an Executive Board Member of a crucial organization called the Cherry Crusade. We deal with the entire student body regarding athletics as the liaison between the student body and the

(continued on page 3)

A Thank-You

(continued from page 2)

Athletics Department. I was recently accepted into the Athletic Training Leadership Council; one student per graduating year is chosen to be on this board. We are the liaison between the Athletics Training students and administrators. I am also an active member of the Temple Student Government, specifically on the Pride and Traditions Committee. Lastly, I am a Campus Recreation Staff Member working in the recreation facilities on our main campus. None of this would be possible without your support.

I want the entire community of Christ Church Cathedral to know I am appreciative and thankful for the constant love and support that you all have given me not only now but also for all 19 years of my life. Not one person is forgotten, not one action unseen in my eyes. I want you to know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. I plan to make each and every one of you proud, and to exuberate the maturity, intelligence and positive attitude you have taught me to have. Most of all, I hope to inspire you to never give up, especially during this time of transition in the church. I truly miss you all so much, and wish I could be there to watch this church and its members grow.

I will undoubtedly make you proud.

With love and sincerity,
Amber Navarro O'Brien

February Calendar

- 4 Cathedral Crafters, 10 a.m.
- 8 Safe Church Training, 9 a.m.
- 9 Communications Team meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 9 Hymn Evensong Festival, Master Class at 3 p.m., service at 4 p.m.
- 12 Team Coordinators meeting at Aziz Home, Wethersfield, 6 p.m.
- 16 Uyeki Justice Forum, 11:30 a.m.
- 16 Absalom Jones Service, 4 p.m.
- 18 Soup & Services, 5 p.m.

Peggy Ornell Fills New Position

At the Annual Parish Meeting, the Rev. Harlon Dalton, Priest-in-Charge, announced that a new staff position of Associate for Parish Life has been created and will be filled by Peggy Ornell. Peggy will be working closely with Vicar Miguelina Howell as well as with the various ministry teams in identifying and meeting the needs of the parish and in outreach.

Parish Committee Members for 2014

The Parish Committee represents the interests of the congregation, advises the clergy and provides leadership to the congregation. All members of the Parish Committee are also members of the Cathedral Chapter, the legally constituted board of trustees of the Cathedral. Following the elections at the recent Annual Parish Meeting, these are the members for 2014 of the Parish Committee:

Lucy Groening, Chair
Vernelle Davis, Vice Chair
Courtney Hanson
Daniel Kingman
Everton McCalla
Kimberly Newport
Jeffrey Baraglia Palmer
Roxanna Rosario
Patricia Wrice

Uyeki Justice Forum Meetings

The Uyeki Justice Forum has changed its regular meeting from the second to the third Sunday of each month at 11:30 a.m. It will be meeting on February 16 in the Cathedral House. Interested persons are invited to attend and take part in discussions about issues of injustice—racial, economic and social—encountered in our daily lives and beyond.



CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL
45 Church Street
Hartford, CT 06103
860-527-7231, office @cccathedral.org
www.cccathedral.org

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Contact:
Lillian Kezerian
860-242-5239
lkezerian@gmail.com

From the Priest-in Charge

Dear friends:

On the theory that important information should be conveyed in multiple ways, I am taking this opportunity to share with you an excerpt from the narrative that accompanies this year's Cathedral budget (see article to the right). I realize that many have already received it in the packet that was distributed at the parish's Annual Meeting. Well, here it is again. I am erring on the side of excess for two reasons: It is vitally important that we be transparent about how we use the gifts that God has given us, and it is vitally important that our finances not be viewed as solely the province of those who enjoy working with numbers.

Midwinter blessings! May you continue to experience Christ's light.

Harlon +

The Rev. Harlon Dalton
Priest-in-Charge

Thoughts About Being a Cathedral

At the Cathedral's Annual Parish Meeting in January, Bishop Ian Douglas shared thoughts about the role of a cathedral in the 21st century. Here is some of what he said:

- What is God saying to us in Hartford? How can we join God in that work? What is God saying to us in the context of neighbors such as Capital Community College and Hartford Stage? It's really about the mission of God.
- Our role as a cathedral in the 21st century is going to be radically different from what it was in 1919 when Christ Church parish became a cathedral.
- If we go deeper into the heart of God in Hartford, what a witness that will be for the 170 parishes in the Diocese. This Cathedral can play a crucial role for the Diocese. Each and every worship community in the Diocese of Connecticut needs to ask what is asked of it in all our neighborhoods.

Excerpt from Cathedral Budget Narrative

"We are at the beginning of a two-year-project to transform the Cathedral's budget so that in addition to capturing our finances it tells the story of our life in Christ. Over the same two-year period we will be focusing on what it means to be a Cathedral in this particular time and place, and on the relationship between the Cathedral and its parish. As our understanding evolves, so too will the ways in which we think about and frame the budget.

The 2014 budget is based on a number of factors including: historical experience; decisions made by Chapter over the past year...; opportunities presented by the revival of our music program; efforts already underway to organize, energize and significantly expand our parish life; our commitment to embrace the richness of our racial, cultural and linguistic diversity; and the aspirations of parish leaders as expressed in meeting after meeting over the past year, and most especially since the arrival of our Vicar. Equally important, the 2014 budget seeks to reflect the understanding that as a Cathedral we are uniquely called to collaborate with others in seeking the welfare of the City of Hartford, enriching the city through artistic expression and modeling what it means to be a Diocese.

Historically, our budget has not distinguished between the revenues, expenses and program areas that relate to the life of the worshiping community and those that relate to our identity as a Cathedral. The 2014 budget begins to make such distinctions, as a first step in conveying that we are a Cathedral and not solely a parish. In part, this has been accomplished by more precise labeling of existing budget headings and budget lines. In addition, we have added new budget lines that reflect our resurrected aspiration to be an energetic citizen of Hartford, a cultural resource for the city, and a hub of Diocesan activity.

In another departure from the recent past, the 2014 budget lifts up evangelism as an essential part of our common life. To be sure, the lines between evangelism and hospitality, and between evangelism and outreach, are blurry, given that we are most effective when we simply live the Gospel rather than try to preach it. Nevertheless, there is virtue in being intentional about inviting others to experience God's reconciling love. To this end, the 2014 budget anticipates that we will reach out to several specific (and overlapping) populations, including: people who live in downtown Hartford; people in their 20's and 30's; students and staff at Capital Community College; students and staff at Hartt and other area music schools; and Hartford's many Latino communities. Another notable feature of the 2014 budget is that it eliminates the Music Program as a stand-alone budget category. This is because music at the Cathedral is not a thing unto itself. Rather it is central to how we worship, and is an important means of evangelism, outreach, and Diocesan and community engagement....

Finally, although there are a number of new expense lines [some of which reflect new commitments] many of them do not represent additional spending for expanded program. For example, the Cathedral has long since welcomed newcomers, supported acolytes and engaged the arts. In the past the funds to support such efforts have been drawn from accounts that are generic in nature. The 2014 budget seeks to be more specific, transparent and descriptive, in hopes of portraying our common life more vividly, and revealing the fullness of our participation in God's mission of restoration and reconciliation."