



Being Sent Into The Neighborhood

Recently I saw a photo of Mr. Rogers with his bare feet in a small plastic swimming pool. He was sitting next to a black policeman whose pant legs were also rolled up and whose feet were in the same water. The photo was taken from the set of Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood in 1969. The man portraying the policeman was the son of sharecroppers, a descendant of slaves, whom Fred Rogers met as a member of the choir in his Pittsburg church. Mr. Rogers asked Francois Clemmons to portray the policeman even though Clemmons' own opinion about police officers was apprehensive. Mr. Rogers prevailed and Clemmons became the first African-American to have a recurring role on a children's television program.

In the picture, Mr. Rogers and Mr. Clemmons do evangelism in the most powerful of ways. They show, they don't tell, they show, how the Kingdom of God is among us, even when the worldly culture is in turmoil. To see a black policeman and a white man with their feet in the same water, as though it were the most natural, the most normal, thing in the world, was to see something in direct opposition to the way of the world at that time. Parents who viewed the episode may have remembered the newspaper images of a hotel owner in Florida pouring acid into the swimming pool where blacks and whites were swimming to protest laws that segregated the races. For Mr. Rogers to invite Mr. Clemmons to cool his feet in the kiddie pool, and for Mr. Clemmons to agree to it, were both acts of courage, and Christian witness to the power of God to reconcile and heal. And, if we Episcopalians don't get the message, with the simple words, "Here, let me help you" Mr. Rogers even shared his towel and helped dry his neighbor's feet. (Preachers: looking forward to your Maundy Thursday homily, feel free!)

The day will come when this Presidential election will be over. By saying this, I hold out the hope that the current political turbulence we are experiencing has an end-date. There are moments when, I confess, I indulge the dream that November 8, 2016 will begin a "return to normalcy," to borrow the Warren G. Harding campaign's isolationist and effective slogan of almost a century ago.

This hope--that the current escalation of vitriol stemming from the collision of visions for what's best for our nation will somehow lessen after Election Day--is most certainly groundless. The anger and fear voiced by crowds at political rallies or on social media or on bumper stickers will not subside with a new President. Those emotions, anger and fear, will simply morph into new slogans, even new slurs. We have to face that truth that neither Secretary Clinton nor Mr. Trump will bring the needed healing to our country. Both strike me as wall-builders. The economic, racial, and societal divisions in our nation are deep. They have been long in the making, and they have insinuated themselves into some of our closest relationships. For many, our neighbors have become strangers. As David Brooks has asked: "Your neighborhood is where you live and sleep. And yet how many of your neighbors do you really know?" I don't mind the number of partisan yard signs on one of my neighbor's lawn that greet me every morning on my way to work. What saddens and jolts me is the sign in the middle: "Do not trespass." Our neighbors have become strangers.

If you listen long enough to the pundits and the commentators on the current election cycle, you might get the impression that we all expect whoever will take the Oval Office in January will be the one who will resolve all our disputes, narrow all our economic disparities, and establish justice for all. But let's be honest, to believe that any presidential administration can fix our neighborhoods, our families, establish a sense of community is to engage in magical thinking. The early Christians did not rely on the empire or local government to provide their community. They honored and respected government and the authorities of the world, but only insofar as these were agents

(Cont. on Pg.2)



Photo from
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(Bishop Rob's Letter, cont.)

of God's justice and peace. Instead, Christians saw their lives as apostolic—sent—into their neighborhoods, as well as into places of strangeness. It was in that same spirit, of being sent into Mr. Clemmons' neighborhood as much as into his own neighborhood, that Mr. Rogers showed to millions of us what true "normalcy" is in God's Kingdom, God's Neighborhood.

For mature Christians, the present distress and joylessness in the secular realm should not come as a surprise or be a source of spiritual depression. It's helpful to remember that Jesus arrived on the scene when the Roman Empire was in decline and announced that there was a Kingdom, a Heavenly Realm, that was already "at hand," that is, it was already arriving in the midst of the present order of human affairs and politics. Jesus came to teach us how to look for that Realm in our immediate experiences: among our neighbors, the sick, the friendless, the sinners, prisoners, the naked, and the hungry, those on the left and those on the right. Mature Christianity chooses, intentionally

decides, to live and act in hope and joy-- even when our natural inclination might be to retreat into fear of or apathy toward our neighbor.

I am heartened that our Church is beginning to recover its original sense of excitement and adventure; we're going to have to learn again how to be a neighbor. We are learning—however haltingly—to go into the neighborhoods where we eat, sleep, depart and return, and ask: what's the source of our neighbor's joy, sorrow, fears and hopes? We risk again to inviting strangers into conversations and meals like Jesus did with the people with whom he was prohibited from consorting. With whom are you being sent to share water or a meal, or a simple conversation over coffee or tea? Remember, you aren't meant to go it alone. Bring a fellow disciple.

Remember, also, that it was over breakfast that the disciples came to recognize the Risen Jesus. It was in the breaking of the bread that the disciples recognized him. It was a conversation at a foreign well that Jesus accepted the dignity of a woman on the margin of her community. One meal, one conversation at a time. That's how the Spirit works to restore us and our community back into a reflection of God's neighborhood.

Gratefully Yours in Christ,
+Rob



Bishop Hirschfeld Blesses New Solar Array at All Saints', Wolfeboro

The array was awarded as the first ever grant from the Standing Committee's new grantmaking program, the Sustainability Resource Grant. Project grants, administered by the Standing Committee, are being made available to support our care of creation by reducing environmental impact and increasing sustainability. Additional funds were provided through the parish's own stewardship campaign.

Courtesy Photo

Extended Summer Program Brings Learning, Joy to Our Kids in Coos County



This summer, more than 40 Coos County students from Kindergarten to eighth grade went to school. Lessons were taught in the classroom, on a lake, in the woods and on the ocean. Each week, a field trip became the base for art, math and reading education, and kids who had never seen the ocean became crustacean experts. Kids who live near Maidstone Lake but never went near it, learned to successfully swim and kayak the waters.

A new Extended Summer School Program for Coos County youth launched this summer with support and leadership from the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire, and a unique partnership with local public school. The Diocese, through the summer chapel at St. Mark's in Groveton, partnered with leaders and educators from the Stratford Public School (serving Stratford, NH and Bloomfield, Brunswick, VT), and the schools in Stark and Groveton, to offer an enrichment program for six weeks this summer.

The Rev. Timothy Brooks of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Lancaster and St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Groveton, and a member of Bishop Hirschfeld's Our Kids Commission, led the Diocesan effort, as founder of the summer program. He explained, "Being a native of the North Country, and seeing the dwindling number of families and opportunities offered to our youth, it was exciting to pilot this Extended Summer School Program, reaching beyond town line boundaries. We often hear conversations that acknowledge the need to work together to help consolidate and maximize resources. By joining forces and working collaboratively, our local schools and Episcopal Churches can offer more for our youth."

Sandi Adams, the principal of Stratford School, explained, "Reverend Tim came to us with the idea. Title I Federal

funding pays for summer school, but it got cut this year, and that meant something had to go. We were looking at two short days of math and reading intervention. The support of the Episcopal Diocese helped us do what we couldn't otherwise do. In this new summer program, there was learning going on every day." Sara Gray, the program's director and a special education teacher in Stratford added, "The most important part was that we were able to offer a full day for these students. These kids were safe for six weeks, four days a week, they were fed, they were educated and they had fun. There are no other recreation programs like this in our area."

"I had never seen the ocean and I saw real dolphins and whales. My mom works full-time, and if I wasn't here, I'd probably have to be at her office with her. This is way better." KYLEE

Social Studies Teacher Daniel Mackin of Stratford Public Schools affirmed, "The opportunity offered by both the school and the Episcopal Church is unmatched in the

North Country. Parents knew their children were in a safe learning environment, and students enjoyed a relaxed atmosphere while honing skills necessary for academic achievement. Additionally, the hands on experienced gained through the many field trip opportunities allow for students to visit places they may not get to on their own."

The first three weeks of the Extended Summer School Program took place at St. Mark's Parish Hall in Groveton, and moved to the Stratford Public School for the following three weeks. Mornings in the program focused on academic-style learning and afternoons offered hands-on learning through the arts, hiking, and swimming. Each of the two-week sessions began with a field trip on the theme of the session (Our Heritage, The Environment and STEAM education). The remaining days were for expression and learning about the theme, culminating with a display and celebration of student work at the end of the program.

(Cont. on Pg.5)

Transition Ministry Update

- The Rev. Johanna Young, Deacon is now serving at St. John's, Dunbarton and Holy Cross, Weare.
- The Rev. Maryan Davis, Deacon is serving at St. Mark's, Ashland and Church of the Holy Spirit, Plymouth.
- Welcome to The Rev. Colin Chapman, new Rector at St. Peter's, Londonderry.
- Welcome to The Rev. Elsa Worth, new Rector at St. James, Keene.
- The Rev. Ted Rice, is serving as Priest in Charge at St. Stephen's, Pittsfield.
- The Rev. Celeste Hemingson is Interim Rector at St. Matthew's, Goffstown, following the retirement of long-time Rector, The Rev. Bill Exner.
- The Rev. Heidi Franz-Dale retired from St. Andrew's, Tamworth. The Rev. Caroline Hines is serving as Interim Rector.
- St. Andrew's, Hopkinton is currently interviewing Candidates for a Priest in Charge.



*The Rev. Colin Chapman,
Rector, St. Peter's,
Londonderry*



*The Rev. Elsa Worth,
Rector at St. James,
Keene*

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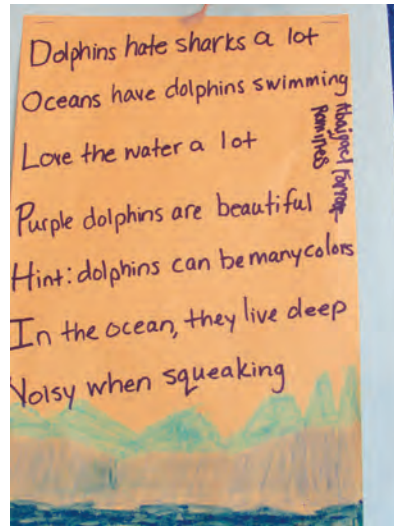
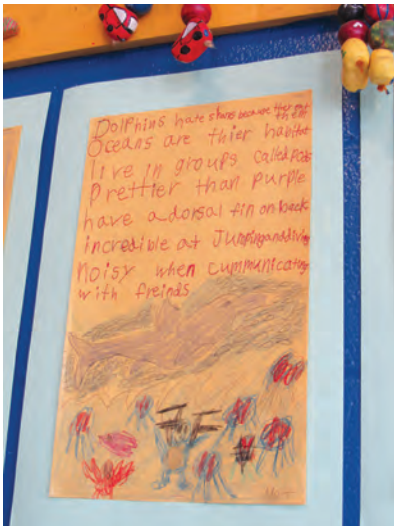
Blogs: The Bulletin, our news blog
nhepiscopalnews.org

Bishop Rob's blog
tendingthevine.org

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Bishop Rob Hirschfeld



(Summer Program, cont.)

A hearty breakfast and lunch were provided each day, prepared by volunteers with support from the NH Food Bank. Students helped serve each other, taking turns with the serving spoon behind the buffet. Program teachers, Lisa and Kim, pointed to meals as critical for both the health and learning of students. Lisa said “The food part is a big deal. Just getting a hot breakfast each day matters.” Kim added, “On Monday mornings, the kids eat three times as much food. They come here hungry.”

The NH Food Bank tried something new, reimbursing for groceries so the program could run its own menu selection. Kim remembered introducing celery to the students. Most of them had never eaten it. “Turns out, they love celery!”

Our Kids Commission Chairman, Ed Doyle, attended the final classroom day for the summer program. He talked with the students, asking what they liked best about the summer program and what they would be doing if the program wasn’t offered. His small focus group included Jason (7 years old), Kylee (11) and Braydon (9).

“I had never seen the ocean and I saw real dolphins and whales. My mom works full-time, and if I wasn’t here, I’d probably have to be at her office with her. This is way better,” said Kylee.

Braydon said, “The best part was going to Maidstone Lake, I got to be in a kayak. I’ve never done that before and I like it!” Asked what he’d be doing if not in the program, he explained, “My mom babysits kids at our house and I have to be really quiet there. My dad works and I don’t know if I could go with him to work, so I don’t know what I’d be doing.”

“I think the best part was swimming lessons. I’m way

better now, so I can go swim when it’s hot,” said Jason. “If I didn’t have classes and field trips I’d probably play video games. What else is there?”

Kylee’s mother, Lori introduced herself to Doyle. She thanked him and others for the program. She recently went back to school, got her real estate license. “She sold her first house!” said Kylee. Lori told Doyle, “This was a huge help to my family. I would have had to pay a babysitter for the past six weeks and that would have been hard. Kylee’s younger brother was also in the program. He’s been shy, and this summer he has come out of his shell. The skill building has been great and they take responsibility for their friends, helping by serving meals, which Kylee really liked. This is great for our community.”

Doyle reflected on the Our Kids Commission work of the Church, “This is what it’s all about. We want to bridge the opportunity gap. It’s wider than ever. This is one way to help.”

Bishop Hirschfeld and The Episcopal Church of New Hampshire have identified serving children as a priority, including addressing the widening gaps among our youth in accessing economic and social opportunity. “This means we will be taking on projects not just to support our kids in the pews and Sunday school classes, but all Our Kids--the youth in the communities where the Church and her members are present. We have an opportunity to serve children, youth and families in new and effective ways,” said Bishop Hirschfeld.

Funding for this Program was provided by Stratford Public School, Groveton Thrift Shop, St. Mark’s Chapel, The Groveton Foundation, the NH Food Bank and the Our Kids Commission of the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire.

214th Annual Diocesan Convention and Tending the Vine: Mission Priorities

As reflected in the 2017 budget, which will be voted on at our Annual Diocesan Convention, November 5, 2016, the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire has Four Mission Priorities, as follows:

- developing the ability of congregations to meet challenges, grow, prosper and extend their ministries
- investing in the development of lay and ordained leadership
- supporting the children of our parishes, communities and state, and
- acting as advocates to uphold the dignity of every human being and care for the Creation.

These priorities guide our work together and serve as a “trellis” for the Vine as we make decisions that involve our human, spiritual and financial resources.

Congregational and Mission Vitality

We want our congregations to thrive. A vital congregation is a place of joy, exploration, experimentation, and a discovery of what God is doing in the world. A vital congregation is a place where apostolic ministry germinates and grows; that is, where our people are sent out to join God’s mission of healing, joy and hope-bearing, peace-making, and justice proclaiming -- being formed as disciples as they return to the parish for worship, formation and support. The Nicene Creed contains the words: “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.” The recent history of our parishes (during the past 50-60 years) has led us to equate evangelism with our capacity to attract new members. Clearly, what has gotten us here will not get us to the place where God is now calling us to be. We need to be sent out, to walk the boundary lines of our geography, comfort, and mission, to see where God is in our communities and to discern where we can join in.

Investing in Leadership: Targeting Resources Towards the Development of Lay and Ordained Leaders

Today’s clergy are moving from being chaplains to established members to being leaders who form apostles to the wider community. Our leaders, clerical and lay, need support as they take on this new way of being and leading. Cultivating leadership means developing new practices and competencies for mission in our communities.

Support of Ministry to Children, Youth, Families and Young Adults

At the last Diocesan Convention the Bishop redefined the term “Our Kids” to specifically and importantly include all the youth of New Hampshire. The Convention raised awareness of the widening gaps among our youth in accessing economic and social opportunity. Addressing these gaps is a priority for the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire. The widening chasms between those who

have access to “social capital” and those who do not is a matter of justice and poses a threat to the stability of our society. This means we will be taking on projects not just to support our kids in the pews and Sunday school classes, but all Our Kids, including the youth in the communities where the Church and her members are present. We have an opportunity to serve in new and effective ways: after-school programs; educational enrichment; adult mentorships; summer camps; recovery from addiction and other programs aimed at serving children at risk. At the last Diocesan Convention, The Bishop charged the Church of New Hampshire to lift up these mission opportunities and subsequently formed the Our Kid’s Commission.

Advocacy for Upholding the Dignity of Every Human Being and Care for the Creation

The Vine as symbol of the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire is one of mutuality and inter-wovenness in Christ, among parishes, with one another and between our Church and a wounded society. At the root of the word advocacy is vocare: to call, or speak. We are calling out the challenges, and we are speaking on behalf of those who have no voice. The Bishop has determined the following priorities to speak to and witness to Christ in the public sphere: Homelessness; Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation; Creation Care; Gun Violence; Mass Incarceration; and the Repeal of the Death Penalty. The Church of New Hampshire has enjoyed influence in policy discussions in these and other areas and we are called to be good stewards of our public voice. We will invest in advocacy training and support for congregational leaders, so we may all lift our voices for the Gospel.

To read more about these projects, the budget implications for these Mission Priorities and to learn how you can be a part of this work, visit our website: www.nhepiscopal.org/convention.



2016 Taizé pilgrims, courtesy photo

Taizé Pilgrimage with NH Youth

This summer, eight pilgrims visited the ecumenical religious community of Taizé, France, led by clergy from the Episcopal Church of NH. The pilgrims entered into the rhythm of monastic life alongside roughly 3,000 others for one week. Three times a day they gathered together for Taizé's unique worship, and they joined young people from around the world for bible study, meals, workshops, practical tasks, and relaxation. On their way to France, the pilgrims stopped off in Britain where they celebrated a Pilgrim's Eucharist at the shrine of St. Alban, joined interfaith activities in Luton, and enjoyed a day in London with worship at St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. On their way home from France, participants visited Ireland, learned about Celtic Christianity, shopped in Dublin, celebrated a Eucharist at St. Brigid's Cathedral, explored the ruins of Kells Priory, and spent their final night at Glenstal Abbey. The participants were Austin Smith, Emilie Major, Kate MacLeod, and The Rev. Jay MacLeod of Saint Andrew's Church in New London; Georgia Atkinson of St. Paul's, Concord; Josiah and Amber Gove of Wilmot United Church of Christ, and The Rev. Celeste Hemingson of Hopkinton.

New Formation Network for NH Episcopalians

Linnae Himsl Peterson, of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Goffstown, has been appointed by Bishop Hirschfeld as Coordinator of "Formation Network NH." The goal of Formation Network NH is to develop and support clergy and lay people interested or involved in Christian Formation for any age, by enabling them to do the following:

- share what is working
- crowdsource ideas and resources locally and nationally
- provide support and training for those involved in all forms of Christian formation.

Peterson's experience has included family, pastoral, and program-sized churches in several denominations. Her passion is finding ways to support the ministry of Christian Formation in smaller congregations.

The Formation Network has an active Facebook page where you can find ideas and inspiration, or look for wisdom on difficult situations. You can find links and additional information at our website, www.nhepiscopal.org/christian-formation/. The Formation Network will be meeting twice a year to share successes and struggles, and to support one another. Peterson is also available to consult with your congregation or convocation about how you can enhance your Christian Formation offerings for all ages. If you would like to be added to the Formation Network NH email list, contact Linnae Himsl Peterson, Coordinator, Formation Network NH at linnaepeterson@gmail.com.

Episcopal Service Corps Set to Launch in Fall 2017

The Episcopal Church of New Hampshire is launching an Episcopal Service Corps site in East Concord, NH, at Assisi House. This will be the first-ever site in Northern New England. This program offers a yearlong internship to a young adult, ages 21-29, with housing in a communal setting. The internships will be at a NH nonprofit (some examples include working on refugee resettlement, advocacy for vulnerable populations and early childhood education).

The interns will receive a small monthly stipend, in addition to having their living expenses covered, in exchange for 32 hours a week of service. The remaining weekday hours will be for group work such as training and spiritual reflection. Interns do not need to be Episcopalians, however.

If you know of graduating students, gap year seekers or other young people you think would benefit from this program or are interested in a positive, skill-building, service-learning opportunity, please refer them to our website and application: <http://www.escnh.org>. You can learn more about the national Episcopal Service Corps program at their website: <http://episcopalservicecorps.org>.

ChIPs: Children of Incarcerated Parents, Your Donations Needed

Please consider a donation to our annual ChIPs appeal for gifts or cash donations to provide holiday presents to children, given by their incarcerated parents. You can learn more about giving guidelines at our website: www.nhepiscopal.org/convention. Many thanks to coordinator Margaret Mackie-Ciancio! She can be reached at: **603 432-7679** or at maggie.ciancio@gmail.com



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