

Partnerships for Mission and Ministry

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Introduction

It is with great joy that we present this booklet describing some of the ways congregations in the Diocese of Maryland are partnering for mission and ministry in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We hope that they will inspire you to envision new ways your congregation can join with others to meet needs in your community, in the nation and in the world. All that you need to get started are eyes to see a need and the desire to do something about it. As the examples in this booklet demonstrate, great things can then happen. Partnerships make it possible to carry forward God's reconciling work in ways that a congregation, working alone, cannot do. Our bishops and diocesan staff stand ready to help you make connections and develop resources.

– The Mission Strategy Team of the Diocese of Maryland

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2005 – 2006

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*Special thanks to Sharon Tillman, Diocesan Communications Editor,
for her help with this booklet.*

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Featured Partnerships

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

– Book of Common Prayer, p. 280

Harford Family House

For over a decade the Episcopal Churches of Harford County have been providing temporary housing for homeless families in that county. Two members of The Church of the Holy Trinity, Churchville initiated this ministry known as Harford Family House, formerly Holy Family House. That initial stepping out in faith from within that congregation began with one apartment and a naive assumption that the “clientele” would be intact families whose homes had burned down. This courageous group learned slowly the realities of life for homeless parents and children in its county. The Harford Regional Council, the diocese and Harford County Social Services quickly became partners.

From that one apartment, HFH has grown to 10 apartments and six homes. The apartments are for transitional situations of up to 1 year and most clients use the full year. The houses are for permanent housing so long as the clients qualify and continue to qualify under HUD guidelines.

In addition to the nine Episcopal Churches, other churches in the County have become involved, sometimes because a parishioner had been helped by HFH. Volunteers from the churches prepare the apartments for new residents and serve as a resource for residents. There is a paid staff: a director, case manager, and receptionist, and while families are in residence, the case manager provides basic financial counseling, helps parents (often single mothers) find employment and/or training, and comfort as they get back on their feet.

The staff and expense associated with the apartments are supported by contributions from churches, the diocese, and grants. Many other churches donate regularly, and organizations such as the Lions Club, the Boy and Girl Scouts, and even the local Victoria's Secret managers have participated in public service projects to benefit HFH.

Sponsoring Churches:

- Church of the Holy Trinity, Churchville
- Holy Cross Church, The Rocks
- Grace Memorial Church, Darlington
- St. Mary's Church, Emmorton
- Emmanuel Church, Bel Air
- Church of the Resurrection, Copley Parish, Joppa
- St. John's Church, Havre de Grace
- Ascension Church in Deer Creek Parish, Scarboro
- Christ Church, Rock Spring Parish
- Mountain Christian
- Cokesbury United Methodist Church
- Bethel Presbyterian

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Pimlico Road Arts and Community Center

The Church of the Holy Nativity is a small mission located in the Park Heights section of Baltimore City. It is surrounded by everything that comes to mind when one thinks of urban blight: poverty, drugs, hunger, violence, illiteracy, inadequate housing and parenting, and dependency. It is also surrounded by thousands of wonderfully bright and eager children and their parents whose lives are impaired by these social conditions. In 1999, under the leadership of the Rev. Victoria Sirota, Holy Nativity's former vicar, a partnership was formed with the nearby St. John's Lutheran Church to form a Development Corporation whose first project is the building of an Arts and Community Center.

This building will soon be under construction, and will house a Head Start Program for 80 young children, a Family Support Center for about 50 young mothers and their babies, and an after-school mentoring and arts program for about 80 school-age children. The center is expected to have a major positive impact on the lives of people in the neighborhood. The Development Corporation is in the last stages of the struggle to raise \$3.2 million dollars to support this project. Members have secured one state bond and are applying for another. This project is also supported by the City of Baltimore, 14 major private foundations, and many generous individuals.

In addition, St. John's and Holy Nativity are currently sharing a Lutheran deacon (called "vicar" by the Lutherans) who spends one Sunday at the Lutheran Church and one at the Episcopal Church, preaching, teaching, working with the mentally-disabled, and leading Bible studies. She also works to further the common project of the Development Corporation. All this "on-the-ground" ecumenism has enabled both churches to expand their ministries beyond what either could have done individually.

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Reaching out to Hampden

Challenged and guided by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the mission of the St. Mary's Outreach Center is to provide services and ministries within the greater Hampden area of Baltimore that will respond effectively to the social, economic, and spiritual needs identified by that community.

In 2003, the diocese and St. David's Church, Roland Park, began a joint effort to provide outreach services to the Hampden community. This partnership, formally named the St. Mary's Outreach Center, was born in the buildings of what had been St. Mary's Church, Hampden. Together, St. David's and the New Start Sub-Committee of Mission Strategy worked to identify social, economic, and spiritual needs in Hampden, and to develop and offer programs and ministries that would respond to the community. Additionally, the vision anticipated that among the programs and ministries offered would be various worship opportunities.

Presently SMOC partners with a variety of not-for-profit organizations located on-site that are doing ministry in the city: Action in Maturity, Baltimore Shakespeare Festival, Episcopal Housing Corporation, Gimme' Shelter Productions, Nearly New Shop (sponsored by St. David's), Union Memorial Senior Services and Without Walls. For information on each of these programs visit the Web site.

St. Mary's Outreach Center has made a dramatic start and is poised for further development as a central location for much-needed programs that improve the quality of life for the residents. At this time, SMOC is commencing with efforts to lay the foundation for a Resource, Assistance, and Referral Center in Hampden.

What SMOC does best is build on partnerships to benefit the community. Each of the organizations/programs listed above came to be at SMOC because their mission objectives in some way complemented and enhanced what is happening at the center; responding to the social, economic, and spiritual needs as revealed by the community.

SMOC employs a part-time executive director and two part-time sextons. The center is governed by a 10-member board of directors, including liaison representatives from the Diocesan Property Committee and the Diocesan Program and Budgets Committee.

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Nourish Western MD Callings

Five parishes in the Western Maryland Region are pursuing a model of ministry known as Mutual Ministry, or total ministry. Each team consists of those who are in discernment for ordination to the diaconate or the priesthood, or for commissioning in a variety of lay ministries. In these five parishes, the process of formation is in full tilt, having begun the parish discernment process in the summer of 2004.

This model has been adopted in areas that tend to be isolated, or in parishes where other circumstances make it difficult to sustain financial support of seminary-trained clergy. Mutual Ministry is based on the premise that every community of faith has, within its membership, all the God-given resources needed to fulfill the needs of that congregation.

Mutual Ministry involves the entire parish. The discernment process works well in small parishes, where most parishioners know each other. First, a committee identifies ministries that are especially important to that parish, and those identified ministries are publicized within the parish.

Following a period of prayer, parishioners are asked to discern of each other who it is that they believe is called to serve in those particular ministries. Those parishioners who are recognized as having gifts and talents that would serve the church for those ministries are asked to go through further discernment, formation and training to fulfill those functions.

The Ministry Support Team for each parish meets regularly. Together they are engaging in *LifeCycles*[™], a curriculum created in part by the Diocese of Northern Michigan for their Mutual Ministry Team development.

The process in Western Maryland is being supported by the Diocese of Maryland through the purchase of the curriculum, and through the support of a missionary and assistant missionary to (far) Western Maryland. The Rev. Richard Morley and the Rev. Elizabeth Webster work in tandem to meet the mentoring needs of those involved in this process. Morley is the liaison to the diocese and arranges plenary sessions for participants of all the involved parishes on topics such as writing prayers and sermons, liturgics, Christian Education, and other topics of interest and formation. Webster is available for spiritual direction and general support throughout the individual discernment processes.

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Children

Little children were being brought to Jesus in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." And he laid his hands on them and went on his way. - Matthew 19:13-15

Children's Peace Center

In 1997 three-year-old James Smith was killed in a shooting by a stray bullet on a Baltimore City street. Since then, each Sunday members of the Cathedral have prayed for all children affected by violence in Baltimore. This led to the establishment of "Peace Days," Saturday workshops for 15-20 elementary age children. Designed to cultivate peace and positive relationships among children, the workshops feature the creative arts, storytelling, labyrinth walking and quilting. Last year a Peace Garden was dedicated to all Baltimore children lost to violence.

The Cathedral's efforts are now known as the Children's Peace Center. The center co-sponsors, with the Church of the Holy Nativity, Pimlico, "All God's Children," a week-long summer camp held at the Bishop Claggett Center. Children for both the Peace Days and summer camp are often sponsored by urban Episcopal Churches. The Cathedral provides the camp with financial support and scholarships, and a number of the counselors and leaders are members of the congregation. With a grant from the Kellogg Foundation, the Cathedral plans to create an after-school program, but partners are needed to make this happen.

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Relating Through Music

Our relationship with Garrett Music Academy is a relatively new one. Garrett is a music school in Owings, four miles north of All Saints', with about 300 students across a wide-range of musical interests. They are instrumental - no pun intended - in helping us organize our monthly band concerts (150-200 teens attending) and our new Teen Jams (coffee house and "open mike" for students), both on Friday evenings. Students from Garrett and members of our Youth Group form the Board of Directors for this enterprise. Their responsibilities include booking the bands, and deciding on the local ministries that we will support. (In March we raised \$740 for Safe Harbor, the shelter for battered spouses). Garrett is also forming a community Youth Choir which will use All Saints' for its rehearsal space, and in return, that group will debut its material within the context of our worship - both Sunday morning and at 5:03, our progressive worship service - which evolved from our Eu2charist participation as a member of Without Walls.

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The Martin Luther King After-School Program

The Martin Luther King After-School Program at St. James' Church, Irvington, is alive with energy as middle school students from West Baltimore work on their assignments. This collaborative program of St. James', St. Bartholomew's Church and the Educational Netcasting Foundation was born of the desire to offer at-risk young people the opportunity to compete fully in our challenging world. The program links technology-based computer learning with the academic content of Encarta Africana, a CD-ROM encyclopedia about the history and culture of Africa and of the people of African descent.

Grants from the diocese (\$8,000) and St. Bartholomew's (\$5,000), and corporate donations (\$25,000), as well as many volunteer hours, transformed the undercroft at St. James' into a classroom hardwired for 15 brand-new computers and computer stations. Since September 2005, teachers have provided lessons that teach typing, advanced computer and Internet literacy, and writing and presentation skills through the study of cultural and historical topics for further academic and professional success. This remarkable program provides a safe space and exciting academics, as well as focused attention and support for our community's young people at a critical time in their lives.

Program leaders are focused on expanding the number of days the program is offered and the number of students it serves, as well as expanding services, securing funding for next year, and incorporating more volunteer support for the kids.

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Christ Child Society

Christ Church, in partnership with Christ Child Society, provides Christmas gifts to about 30 underprivileged children annually. At the same time, donated grocery store gift cards are provided to needy families. The women of Christ Child Society have been providing gifts to children under the age of 12 for more than 116 years. They prepare lovely, large packages of toys and clothing valued at \$200 for 400-500 children nationally each Christmas. The South County Baby Pantry, which is managed out of Christ Church, also receives an annual gift from the organization to buy formula, diapers, clothing, cribs and car seats. In 2005 we received \$2,000 for the pantry. Christ Child Society is a non-profit Catholic volunteer organization that is dedicated to helping children in need regardless of race or religious affiliation.

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Rainbow Camp

Every summer for the past seven years, Rainbow Camp has provided a safe place for children who are infected or affected by HIV-AIDS. This important ministry is possible because of a partnership between the diocese (through the Bishop's Appeal) and area parishes. St. Paul's, Poplar Springs, has had the longest commitment to this ministry, and last year a new partner, St. Luke's, Franklin Square, joined the mission. Counselors and other volunteer staff come from or through the two parishes. Various parishes, including Emmanuel Church, Baltimore, Church of the Redeemer, St. Bartholomew's Church and others, have also contributed money and items for the camp.

On average, 40 children attend Rainbow Camp each year, which is held at the Bishop Claggett Center. Campers have come from Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Howard County through referrals from healthcare agencies and programs, and other campers. Rainbow Camp also gives young people an opportunity to develop their leadership skills. Each year exceptional former campers are given the opportunity to return as junior counselors at age 14, and then as counselors. This has been very successful.

Rainbow Camp grew out of the Diocesan HIV-AIDS Committee. Not only does it serve as an opportunity for the campers to experience a different environment and activities, but it also provides them with the opportunity to receive close attention from caring adults and teens. Because many campers exhibit behavior that is consistent with a lack of meaningful, consistent, nurturing interaction with others, most are very receptive to being cared for. As one of last year's campers wrote in her thank you letter, "I wanted to write this letter because, I love each and every one of you guys very, very, very much."

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Copley Kids

It all started with a successful summer odd-jobs program for local students in 1994. Parishioners of the Church of the Resurrection, Copley Parish in Joppa, wanted to help local youth learn skills and improve social interaction. Through the Copley Kids Odd Jobs Program, participants learn good work ethics, receive positive social interaction among youth, and learn to interact positively with adults. Students perform various types of odd jobs, such as mowing grass, raking leaves, painting fences, removing tree stumps, shoveling snow and cleaning garages for clients. The students receive minimum wage, with social security and other applicable taxes paid by the program.

The Scholastic Program was added in 1995 to help the children at two local schools raise their academic standing. Three days a week from 3-6 p.m. students in grades K-12 receive homework assistance, some tutoring, and social interaction. Twenty computers with Internet access are available to the students.

A hallmark of Copley Kids is its music program. The Maryland Conservatory of Music has partnered with the program so that interested students can receive instrumental lessons, sing as a choir, or learn to read music. With six acres of lawn, students enjoy plenty of free play. Today, Copley Kids serves an average of 105 children annually. As many as 29 different schools are served by the program. Parents and teachers have reported marked improvement in grades of Copley students. Other organizations, including one in North Carolina, have asked for help to implement similar programs in their area.

Support comes from the diocese through the Bishop's Appeal, community residents, and from the Harford County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. This support helps pay the salaries of the four staff members, and assists with other expenses. There are also four dedicated volunteers. A separate board of directors that includes educators, parishioners, and business and community members oversees operations.

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Neighbors

A lawyer asked Jesus a question to test him.

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

- Matthew 22:35-40

A Strong Beginning

In 2005 St. David's Church, along with other parishes in the diocese, partnered with the Baltimore International Seafarers' Center and its director, the Rev. Mary Davisson. The goal of our Outreach Committee was to become more involved with a local and/or diocesan program that desired the support of a parish that could offer the necessary resources needed for the program to thrive.

Besides the financial support that was provided last year, St. David's has also sent volunteers from the congregation to regularly assist with various tasks at the center. The volunteers have led both magazine and mug drives for the mariners with great success, collecting much needed reading material and coffee cups for use by the incoming crewmembers, fresh off of vessels from around the world.

St. David's is certainly blessed to have this partnership with the Seafarers' Center blossom under Mary's leadership, and we hope to see it continue to grow in the years ahead.

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Charity Concert Series

St. Paul's Parish, Point of Rocks, has hosted a concert series for the past fifteen years. The concerts are an outreach and gift to the community from St. Paul's. Although the concerts are free to the public, a free-will offering is collected for donation to a designated charity. The recipients are often local organizations, such as Frederick County Hospice, the Frederick Coalition for Emergency Human Needs, and Heartly House. Sometimes, however, the scale of human tragedy extends far beyond St. Paul's community. Special concerts for the Tsunami victims and a concert for earthquake victims in Pakistan were held to aid those in need around the world. St. Paul's is a small church with great acoustics and a strong music program. The concerts feature musicians from the area and a variety of music including bluegrass, Celtic, classical, hammer dulcimer and opera.

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Working for All

The Cathedral of the Incarnation has close ties to its surrounding community. Members can be found building homes, building support and building bridges all to benefit neighbors known and unknown. Each of these projects is ongoing and represents a significant investment of time and money; 10 percent of the Cathedral's budget is directed to outreach.

Building Sandtown

The Cathedral has been partnered with New Song Urban Ministries in West Baltimore since 1989. Together with its joint partner, Sandtown Habitat for Humanity, members of the Cathedral have sponsored and built 14 houses. Construction crews of three to eight people work each Saturday, and at the end of the project the Cathedral hosts a party for the new homeowners. The Cathedral has realized many benefits from this ongoing project; long-lasting partnerships and friendships have been formed across racial and economic lines, and with other churches. Of all the outreach projects the Cathedral takes on, this one engages the most people – several hundred in fact – over approximately nine months. Members get involved by working, donating money or materials, and providing support in the form of babysitting and cooking. One of the reasons members stay involved is that Habitat projects have tangible results. It costs \$25,000 to sponsor one house and over the years Cathedral parishioners have donated approximately \$300,000 and countless work hours.

Creative Partnering

A church supporting a public school might sound like an oxymoron, but not to members of the Cathedral. As members of the Greater Homewood Interfaith Alliance, the Cathedral is partnered with Abbottston Elementary School, a Baltimore City public school. It is through GHIA that volunteers tutor in the school, support the teachers and administrators, and provide financial support. The church also sponsors other projects that a PTA might usually handle, including funding buses for field trips. The success of this program shows that a church can still be a link in its community by bringing children together with projects and programs. This relationship began in 2001 and \$5,000 in financial support as well as school and art supplies, books and student uniforms have been provided to GHIA for the school.

BRIDGE

The Cathedral is a charter member of Baltimore Regional Initiative Developing Genuine Equality, better known as BRIDGE. Each year this interfaith group focuses on a specific public policy issue in a way that no single house of worship could. At the beginning of the year each member hosts "listening meetings" within its congregation to find out the issues of economic and social justice people are most concerned with. This action alone helps strengthen the congregations. Next, representatives from each member hold a town meeting where together they decide on that year's issue. This year BRIDGE is focusing on workforce housing issues. During the advocacy phase, volunteers meet with politicians and discuss the group's concerns. BRIDGE does not endorse any candidates. The annual dues are one-percent of the annual operating budget and a core team of six volunteers work to coordinate this program.

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Aid for West Baltimore

Eleven years ago the 40 West Assistance and Referral Center began to offer help to the under-served in West Baltimore. It arose from the concerns of 12 churches along the 40 West corridor about its residents who were “falling through the cracks” of a myriad of systems. Located at St. Bartholomew’s Church, the center is focused on residents who live in zip codes 21229 and 21207, providing emergency financial assistance for families and children to prevent eviction and utility turn-offs, and paying for prescriptions for those without funds.

In addition to financial assistance, the Center also offers referrals to agencies for long-term help, emergency food and short-term counseling. Each month the center assists about 50 families financially and receives more than 400 phone calls, during which referrals and some assistance are offered.

The center is open two mornings and one evening each week. It is staffed by a part-time, paid director and volunteers. The 12 churches in the 40 West Ministerium support the center. Pledges average \$500 to \$2,000 a year, depending on the congregation’s size. The center has also received several grants over the years and some important additional donations from families, corporations and trust funds. The ministerium and its congregations are grateful to help support and sustain those challenged by low income or illness, living outside the doors of our churches in West Baltimore.

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Good Neighbors

Church of the Redemption, Locust Point, is the Baltimore International Seafarers’ Center’s closest Episcopal neighbor, just half a mile away, and has had a special relationship to this ministry to seafarers for a long time. In fact, Brother Ed was deacon assigned to this parish when he began the ministry of the center. Currently, it is the parish of record for the Rev. Mary Davisson, director of the center. The Rev. Annette Chappell, rector of Redemption, provided liturgical mentoring during the months following Mary’s diaconal ordination in 2004 and hosted Mary’s priestly ordination in 2005. Mary, in turn, preaches and officiates regularly at Redemption.

This is a small church with a big heart. Parishioners of Redemption have supplied Christmas gifts, set up a collection point for donated magazines and clothing, and volunteer to maintain the center’s database as well as to organize mailings. A number of parishioners also make regular cash donations.

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Literacy Marketplace

Baltimore City school teachers often do not have enough books and supplies for their classrooms and frequently purchase items with their own money. Three years ago, St. Bartholomew's Church, in concert with eight other churches, started a Literacy Marketplace to help provide elementary school teachers in zip code 21229 with the books and supplies they need.

Each church collects a wide variety items for the schools during Lent. Teachers' wish lists are sent to the churches to help guide the donations. Last year more than 2,000 books were collected, along with hundreds of notebooks, pencils, crayons, and even bookcases and DVDs. The items are then brought to St. Bartholomew's parish house, where they are sorted, priced and displayed, as if they are going to be sold.

On Marketplace day, a Saturday, two representatives from each school come to "shop." After refreshments, they receive lots of Monopoly® money to "buy" books and supplies for their classrooms. They "shop" until their money runs out or all the supplies are gone.

The cost of the project is minimal - less than \$500 for mailings and materials - yet the return for the children is great; last year enough books were distributed to provide one for each child in the public elementary schools in the area. The event also engages many parishioners - those who donate, those who collect, sort, price and "sell," and the teachers who "buy" materials for their classrooms. But, it is the kids who benefit from having wonderful books to read and materials to work with in their classrooms.

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WombWork Productions, Inc.

WombWork Productions, Inc. has the mission to heal and empower youth, their families, and communities while preserving cultural legacies through the performing arts. This group currently utilizes the Church of St. Mary the Virgin as a rehearsal facility and opens all activities to the members of the church and the entire Baltimore City community. St. Mary's has been in partnership with WombWork since 2000. As a member of the vestry at St. Mary's and president of the board of WombWork, Geraldine Waters envisioned a meaningful relationship. She introduced the directors to the rector of the church, who at that time was the Rev. James Manning, and with vestry approval the partnership began.

WombWork, a nonprofit (501c3) organization, produces the Nu World Art Ensemble, their community-based theatre company designed to reach youth age 12–25. Nu World is a comprehensive performance art, peer-to-peer, and youth development initiative with the goal of engaging young adults in the development, creation, management and presentation of original productions that confront topical issues such as: domestic violence and dating violence , HIV/AIDS , substance abuse, inter-generational communications and so much more.

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For Parents, for Children

The Central MD Child Transfer Center was established at St. James', Mt. Airy, in collaboration with The Children's Rights Council headquartered in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the center is to provide a neutral, safe, and non-confrontational environment where divorced, separated or never-married parents come to exchange their children every other weekend. Families are self-referred or court-ordered to the service in most cases. The church provides a volunteer director and monitors, as well as the space, and CRC provides initial training, general advertising and consulting at no cost. Expenses are limited to liability insurance, which CRC can help with, and the expense of having the church open during non-service hours, as well as a few office supplies. The center has received many expressions of gratitude from parents for the hope that they find in using the center and for removing the confrontational aspect of exchanges.

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Wilson Ministry Center

For over ten years, Grace Memorial Church in Darlington has partnered with the Wilson Ministry Center, to provide outreach ministry to area residents. A bequest from Dorothy Wilson enabled Grace Church to purchase the building that houses the center in December 1989. Following extensive renovations, the center opened its doors in 1993. Since then it has operated as a multi-purpose community facility open to the public for the purposes of education and programming for all ages. The center offers childcare services, support groups, music instruction, cultural activities and social services. In recent months the center has hosted teen dances and provided seniors with free tax preparation help.

The center is located on the same campus as Grace Memorial Church. A separate board of directors, with members from various area churches and organizations, governs the center, reflecting its community orientation. Costs to maintain the building are covered by the parish while all other expenses are paid through fundraising activities and grants. The diocese has provided funding support for two programs.

Although diversity in both programming and services is evident at the center, there is one focus and purpose: to help people lead better lives. The Wilson Ministry Center blends the resources, skills and volunteer spirit of both the secular and faith communities to accomplish this purpose.

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Urban/Suburban Covenant

In 1998, two historic churches, St. James' Church, Lafayette Square, an urban parish in Baltimore, and St. John's Church, a suburban parish in Ellicott City, began a covenant relationship. In addition to activities such as a summer film festival and shared Lenten programs, both parishes have been involved in dialogue and discernment on a common ministry to serve the Harlem Park Community in which St. James' is located. Program planning and fund-raising for a new model of joint urban ministry began in 2003. Thus far, St. James' has pledged its former official site, a building at 1005 W. Lafayette Street, to be known as Covenant House. Fundraisers at St. John's have generated \$19,000 in seed money for Covenant House ministries.

Our rectors and vestries are committed to this project as we live into our call to serve Christ in our community. The Covenant's first outside support was obtained in the form of a planning grant from the diocese in 2003. That grant was used to underwrite a needs assessment of the Harlem Park community. The results from this study give support to the focus of Covenant House ministries that will include basic need and advocacy programs, such as a Pre-GED program, a food bank, and health awareness, job readiness and parenting classes.

Additional support has been pledged by both parishes. The parishes also expect to seek additional grants for start-up costs, sustaining costs and facility renovation from the diocese and other sources. The Covenant Committee is currently developing a business plan to determine start-up costs and assist in obtaining funding for renovation of the building.

Taking our call from Matthew 25:35-36, *"for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me,"* St. James' and St. John's parishes through their covenant relationship hope to remove obstacles that beset the people of God who live in Harlem Park. The Covenant Steering Committee anticipates ministry to begin as early as 2007.

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Community Support

Boy Scouts – Troop 51

St. Paul's Church, Sharpsburg, has been the charter organization for Boy Scout Troop 51 since the 1980s. In showing their appreciation of this, the Scouts have helped with set up and clean up for fund raisers, helped clean the parking area, helped with weed church gardens, helped with minor repairs and improvements, and other small projects as they arise. Over the years, several families have become members of St. Paul's. One scout, Bryan Warner, who attends St. Paul's, earned his Eagle Badge with work through the parish and its rector, the Rev. John Alfriend.

The W House of Hagerstown Foundation, Inc.

The W House Foundation, Inc. is a 17-bed residential facility offering a wide variety of services to women who are recovering from drug and alcohol dependency. Residents of this program must be over 18, be able to obtain employment, attend daily AA/NA meetings, and be willing to obtain sponsorship within a 12-step program and participate in an individualized treatment plan.

W House provides a home-like environment that is accessible to public transportation and opportunities for independent growth and responsible community living. They offer professional addiction treatment services combined with a structured recovery environment. Clinical services are directed toward enhancing treatment acceptance and motivation, preventing relapse and promoting eventual reintegration into the community through addressing vocational rehabilitation, parenting skills, emotional coping skills and the development of a support network.

St. Paul's Church, Sharpsburg, has supported this foundation for several years. This has been a congregational effort, but was spearheaded by the Episcopal Church Women. Several truck loads of household items have been delivered and monetary donations have been provided. This is an ongoing ministry for St. Paul's.

Elizabeth Partlow, Church Liaison to Boy Scouts and ECW president
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Faith in Action

South County Faith Network, Inc.

This interdenominational, non-profit group of churches, including Christ Church, West River, provides informal, home-based services to seniors and disabled adults. In an effort to improve the quality of life for these members of our community, the network provides care giver relief, friendly visits, grocery shopping, light housecleaning, minor home repairs and maintenance, pastoral visits, telephone reassurance, transportation referrals, yard work, and more. Each participating church provides financial support and a list of willing volunteers to the network. The South County Faith Network received a start-up grant, but soon will rely on financial support from the participating churches and from its own fund-raising endeavors. The network operates in Southern Anne Arundel County.

Carla Catterton, Project Director
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South County Assistance Network (SCAN)

SCAN is an interdenominational group of churches that contributes money and food to support its local food pantry, which is based at St. James' Parish, Lothian. At Christ Church, we encourage participation in this project throughout the year, with special emphasis given at Thanksgiving and Lent, and through youth activities such as Souper Bowl of Caring and the annual Shrove Tuesday pancake supper. Souper Bowl of Caring is a national program that involves collecting donations on Super Bowl Sunday for local community programs and projects. Each participating church designates where the money is used, and Christ Church typically supports SCAN or the Lighthouse Shelter in Annapolis.

Alice Murray
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Focus on Housing

Where a church focuses its energy depends on how the congregation interprets its role in social issues. Members of All Saints' Church in Sunderland believe that part of a church's covenant is to not only recognize problems and provide hospitality and stewardship, but to also help solve the problems by getting involved politically. We are strict in our policy not to endorse any political candidates; however, we work hard to make both our presence and collective view known to those in power. A prime example of this is our work in the area of fair housing. Many of the people who provide basic services in our area, especially teachers, cannot afford to live near where they work. We are taking steps to change that.

PRISM - Partnership for Renewal in Southern and Central Maryland

This is a fledgling Gamaliel Foundation (www.gamaliel.org) affiliate and All Saints' is one of the charter members. Membership provides tools for identifying and strengthening leaders in the parish, and provides both the skills and motivation needed for engagement in the public arena. PRISM also enables partnerships with like-minded congregations and strategic partners. One such partnership is with the Innovative Housing Institute, whose resources enabled a member of All Saints' to write and submit zoning legislation to the Board of County Commissioners. If passed, it will stimulate the creation of affordable housing in Calvert County across a wide-spectrum of income levels. Both our senior warden and rector have testified at the public hearings surrounding the current zoning re-write.

HFAC - Housing for All Calvert

All Saints', along with League of Women Voters, Concerned Black Women of Calvert County, Concerned Black Men of Calvert County and United Way, founded this housing coalition in July 2005. HFAC has steadily grown its membership and is developing short- and long-term strategies. All Saints' members are working closely with HFAC members to create a formidable public presence as articles of support appear almost weekly in the *Washington Post*, *The Calvert Recorder* and the *Independent*.

Project ECHO

Project ECHO, transitional housing and homeless shelter, was organized several years ago by a coalition of Calvert County churches, including All Saints'. It now stands alone with an executive director and board. All Saints' holds two seats on the board, cooks for the shelter on Monday evenings, and supports ECHO financially. This year we created a win-win situation for two groups with specific needs.

Until February, the Calvert County Board of Education sponsored a subsidized day care program for pre-school children of teachers at Sunderland Elementary School. The day care was eliminated from the school when more classroom space was needed, and that led the board of education to us. Using part of our church school space, we have been approved for 19 children and currently serve only eight (down from 12 last year). All Saints' charges no rent, but in return we receive slots at no charge for children of families in need of their services. We have added one child to their roster from a single mom in our community, but more importantly, we are working through Project Echo and Safe Harbor to identify client families that might benefit from this arrangement.

In line with our housing commitment, the other project involves a fund we have created to provide security deposits and first month rent subsidies for graduates of Project ECHO's transitional housing program and those who come through other agencies, such as Safe Harbor and Catholic Charities. We have submitted a grant request to the diocese to match the \$5,000 we have set aside for this program and we are currently enlisting other members of the Calvert Interfaith Council in support of this effort.

The Rev. Ken Phelps, Rector
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Shelter from the Cold

In 1996 an interdenominational coalition of 20 churches, including St. John's, Hagerstown, collaborated with Reach, Inc. to provide a cold weather shelter for the homeless in and around Hagerstown. The coalition continues to provide volunteers, food, and money to operate the shelter on a rotational basis during the winter months. Until 2005 each church hosted the shelter in its parish hall for one to two weeks of the season. This year the shelter moved into a permanent dormitory facility in Hagerstown, where on average, 41 people stay per night. Volunteers from St. John's worked the week of March 19, serving food and administering the berthing arrangements from 6 p.m.-7 a.m. each day. Reach, Inc. is a nonprofit agency that has been operation for 15 years.

In addition to the shelter, members of St. John's help feed the hungry through two programs. They collaborate with the SHARE Discounted Food Distribution Program, which distributes groceries monthly at half cost to 70-80 people in the community. Volunteers from St. John's and Habitat for Humanity, who obtain "sweat equity" hours for their participation, help with distribution. Trinity Lutheran Church operates a community food bank and members of St. John's collect and deliver food every week to help stock the food bank.

Charlie Foreman, Shelter Project Coordinator
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Sarah's Hope

In the spring of 2003 the Rev. Adrien Dawson, assistant rector of Trinity Church, Towson, sent an E-mail to a handful of people who had expressed concern about the growing number of homeless people, and the distinct lack of services, in Baltimore County. In it she invited people to share in a conversation about this issue. She also invited representatives from St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore to come and share their expertise, as they manage many centers in Baltimore City that serve the homeless. With the parish hall set to seat about 20 people, she was surprised when 65 people came for the discussion. There were people from 24 different congregations, and from the county and city governments. Abraham's Tent Coalition was formed, consisting of about 44 congregations and agencies, out of that first meeting. Together with St. Vincent de Paul and Baltimore County, Abraham's Tent began to develop a day center to serve the homeless in the county.

That center, known as Sarah's Hope Outreach Center, opened on November 1, 2004. The center is managed by staff from St. Vincent de Paul, is housed in a county building, and flourishes with volunteers and contributions from many different congregations and individuals. Sarah's Hope relies on funding from Baltimore County, grants, and contributions from faith communities. Sarah's Hope is also able to offer meeting space for many groups who serve the homeless with intensive case management, literacy training, health screenings, parenting classes, tutoring for students, and employment training for adults. Volunteers from Trinity Church work at Sarah's Hope once a month, cooking and serving lunch; staffing the intake desk; managing the clothing distribution, showers, laundry, and phones; and playing with the children who are not yet old enough to attend school. It is a tremendous ministry to all who are involved, those who are homeless and those who seek to serve them in the image of Christ.

The Rev. Adrien Dawson, Assistant Rector
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The Interfaith Service Coalition

St. Thomas' Church, Hancock, is a principal founder and very active supporter of the Interfaith Service Coalition of Hancock, Inc. The agency was founded in 1989 by Hancock area churches and is a non-profit, faith-based organization dedicated to assisting families and individuals in times of need. The ISC is the only church-sponsored social ministry agency in western Washington County, serving clients there and in nearby Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The agency is guided by a board of directors comprised of local clergy, businesspeople and laypersons. A full-time executive director and a part-time administrative assistant oversee this ministry. The Rev. Allan Weatherholt, rector of St. Thomas', serves as president of the ISC board of directors.

Programs of the ISC include a training program and monthly food co-op for low income residents, summer day camp for at-risk middle school students, literacy program for elementary school children, winter assistance program for senior citizens, and the administration of locally-assigned FEMA funds for utility and rental assistance. The agency works closely with local schools, police departments, health care providers and the Washington County Department of Social Services to meet the needs of its clients. Funding for the ISC is provided through the daily operation of its Loaves and Fishes Thrift Store, yearly gifts from local churches, grants, and its affiliation with United Way of Washington County.

Interfaith Service Coalition of Hancock, Inc.
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Hancock, Md. 21750
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The Rev. Allan Weatherholt, Rector
Saint Thomas' Church
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What Goes Around Comes Around

Since 2000, Church of the Ascension, Middle River, has worked closely with elementary schools in the surrounding community. Each year, shortly after school recesses for the summer, Ascension's parishioners begin collecting school supplies for the next school year. This outreach has led to a special bond between Ascension and the local schools, as well as local social workers who work with the rector to support certain families as well as the schools in general.

After hurricane Isabel, Ascension needed to reclaim the property along its shoreline and return it to its natural state. The diocese and the Chesapeake Bay Trust assisted Ascension by providing grants that marked the beginning of the funding for the ongoing stewardship of God's creation and the preservation of a natural resource. As an outgrowth of our relationship with the Baltimore County Schools, students and their families assisted parishioners with replanting. This relationship continues to blossom and flourish. Ascension has invited the families to plant an edible garden containing herbs and vegetables. The bounty of the garden will belong to the families; the surplus they may sell. This project is intended to teach the stewardship of creation as well as the stewardship of time, talent and treasure.

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Shepherd's Staff

For over 80 years, the town of Westminster has had an active and ecumenical ministerium, cooperating on a number of ministries to benefit the community. A particular highlight is its Shepherd's Staff ministry. About 15 years ago, concern about the numbers of people who had to go from church to church, laying out their need again and again, led to the idea of developing a common site and coordinated ministry. The ministerium determined that it could help people more effectively by pooling resources and having one entry point for that help. From the beginning, Church of the Ascension, Westminster, has played an active role in Shepherd's Staff, providing board members, volunteers, and monetary donations.

The numbers are impressive. Each year Shepherd's Staff helps several hundred people with various needs from rent and energy assistance, transportation, medical, prescription, and clothing, to just plain help navigating and coordinating "the system." In fact, Carroll County is noted for having the lowest percentage of its population on welfare in the state. To be sure, part of that is because the county enjoys a good standard of living. However, experts in social issues have attributed this success to cooperation among the helping agencies and churches so that most people are caught by the safety net before they ever fall far enough to need that help of last resort.

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Helping Neighbors Near and Far

Holy Trinity, Essex, partners with local, national and international organizations in an effort to spread the Gospel of Christ and live out its mission of hospitality.

Each month Holy Trinity provides food to both Sarah's Hope Outreach Center, a shelter for homeless women and children in Baltimore County, and Eastern Interfaith Outreach, a local emergency assistance organization. EIO also receives funding from Holy Trinity. Through the Department of Social Services, Holy Trinity provides Thanksgiving dinner to 40 families and a Christmas dinner with Santa, distributing presents to 200 neighbors in need.

There is a pastoral counselor at Holy Trinity who provides free counseling for those with addictions and codependency problems, funded through a diocesan grant. DRADA – Depression and Related Affective Disorders – meets twice a month in the parish hall.

Each year parishioners deliver new books and school supplies to Ascension Church in Hinton, W.Va. as part of their national outreach.

Holy Trinity's budget contains line items for Episcopal Relief and Development, and The Bishop's Appeal. This year the church is in the early stages of initiating a companion relationship in the Diocese of the Dominican Republic. A full 25% of Holy Trinity's budget now is used outside the church and they are striving toward 50%.

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One Straw Farm

The Church of the Messiah, Baltimore, has partnered with One Straw Farm, a family-operated organic vegetable farm in Northern Baltimore County, to serve as a Community-Supported Agriculture pickup site. Community-Supported Agriculture is a business model that allows consumers to pay for their produce in advance at the beginning of a growing season in exchange for a share of a farm's weekly harvest. Growers benefit by receiving much-needed pre-harvest funding, while consumers benefit from a wide variety of wholesome fresh produce at a fixed price that usually ends up being far less than they would spend at the supermarket.

Participating parishioners and neighbors from the surrounding community enjoy 24 weeks of fresh, locally-grown organic produce from early June through late November. Weekly shares are distributed in the early evening in the shade of a beautiful maple tree that stands in Messiah's grassy close, a setting that encourages participants to slow down and spend some much-needed fellowship time with one another. Unclaimed shares plus bonus shares provided by One Straw Farm are also distributed to the neighborhood senior center and other neighbors in need.

Community-Supported Agriculture continues Messiah's long tradition of ministry through food while endorsing the faithful stewardship practices of sustainable agriculture.

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Camp Amazing Grace

St. James', Lothian, and the Prison Ministry Task Force have partnered with a dozen churches, Big Brother Big Sisters of Central Maryland, and Angel Tree of Prison Fellowship in creating Camp Amazing Grace. In its first year, this week-long camp and year-long mentoring program gives 25 children of prisoners at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women a chance to just be kids. Camp Amazing Grace will try to break the destructive cycle tearing apart families that later sends those children to prison.

Camp Amazing Grace will be held at the Bishop Claggett Center July 8-14. It began with the Prison Ministry Task Force coordinated by Val Hymes of St. James', and co-chaired by the Revs. Mimi Mathews, St. John's, Ellicott City, and Phebe L. McPherson, Epiphany, Odenton.

The Rev. Eddie Blue, Holy Trinity, Baltimore - camp director; the Rev. William H. C. Ticknor, St. James' - camp chaplain; the Rev. Tammy Wooliver, Johns Hopkins Hospital - program director; Jim Bradne, St. James' - volunteer coordinator, and Sharon McGlaughlin, Liz Rozenbroek and Earl Buffaloe, all St. James', - crafts and music leaders.

The Rev. Jackie Means, the Episcopal Church USA, camp nurse. The diocese: Donna and Joe Kerner, Claggett directors and members of St. Mark's, Highland; Bishop Ihloff, the Rev. Wes Wubbenhorst, youth missionary; the Rev. Carl Rehling, peace and justice liaison.

Volunteers for the project: members of Church of the Redeemer, Baltimore; Church of St. Mary, Woodlawn; St. Thomas' Church, Homestead; St. Mark's Church, Highland; Emmanuel Church, Cumberland; St. James' Parish, Monkton, and St. Alban's Parish, Glen Burnie.

The goal is for \$500 from each parish in sponsorships; more than \$2,000 has been received plus \$3,000 from Angel Tree. Coordinators have applied for grants and hope to partner with service and fraternal organizations.

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Remington Neighborhood Successes

The Church of the Guardian Angel, located in Baltimore's Remington neighborhood, has a long-standing tradition of spearheading ministries with and for residents of Remington, its geographical parish. In order to effectively serve its neighbors, Guardian Angel partners with three suburban churches: Church of the Redeemer, Baltimore; St. Andrew's Church, Glenwood; and Epiphany Church, Dulaney Valley; as well as with Episcopal Housing Corporation and members of the secular community. Not only have local residents benefited from this "Tri-Parish Committee," but members of each suburban parish reap rewards from their involvement in this urban ministry.

Within Guardian Angel, the Remington-Guardian Angel Partnership steering committee considers and makes recommendations to the vestry about the establishment of new, long-term ministries to be located at the church. The vestry seeks partners whose core values mesh with those of the church.

Together, the Tri-Parish Committee and R-GA Partnership offer a variety of ministries, programs and projects including, Homework Club, food pantry, thrift shop, holiday meals and gifts, weekly community dinners, monthly fun days, Summer Art Camp, 12-step groups, housing efforts and advocacy, Head Start, The Green School – a new charter school with environmental focus, and an annual back-to-school celebration that outfits more than 100 kids with backpacks and supplies.

Funding for these programs is provided by Redeemer and the diocese, with in-kind and monetary donations coming from a variety of other resources and churches. Redeemer has given more than \$50,000 over four years in support of the part-time rector's salary. The diocese continues to support Guardian Angel's work with the suburban parishes, agreeing that the ministry of the laity is difficult and worthy of support. The church recently received a new computer from Mr. Joe Carter of St. Anne's, Annapolis, enabling them to have Internet access. A Web site is currently in the planning phase.

The Rev. Alice Jellema, Rector
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National

So the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This can only be sadness of the heart." Then I was very much afraid. I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my ancestors' graves, lies waste, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" Then the king said to me, "What do you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. Then I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor with you, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my ancestors' graves, so that I may rebuild it."

- Nehemiah 2:2-5

KERMIT

The Katrina Emergency Relief Impact Team, or KERMIT, is a joint ministry of the Church of St. Christopher, Linthicum, and the Church of the Holy Apostles, Arbutus. The Revs. Lura Kaval and Katrina Grusell, rectors of the two parishes, respectively, contacted the rector of St. Patrick's, Long Beach, Miss. immediately following Hurricane Katrina. St. Patrick's buildings were completely destroyed by the hurricane, as were thirty-five percent of its parishioners' homes. In the weeks following Katrina, the two parishes sent liturgical supplies, hundreds of dollars in gift cards for parishioners, and more than \$32,000.

It quickly became clear that the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast would be a long, difficult process; one that desperately needed the presence of hands-on relief workers. The parishes deepened their connection to the relief effort, joining in ministry with Camp Coast Care. This Long Beach facility, supported by the Diocese of Mississippi, houses and feeds volunteers from all over the country who come to remove debris and rebuild homes and lives. For six months Camp Coast Care also provided a free medical clinic and served as a site for food and clothing distribution.

Kaval and Grusell created KERMIT in November 2005 to encourage their parishioners to travel to Mississippi and directly serve the people affected by the hurricane. Soon, KERMIT was opened to all parishes in the dioceses of Maryland and Easton. Each month, KERMIT teams travel to Long Beach and assist with the relief effort. As of April closes, KERMIT sent more than 70 people to Mississippi. Several KERMIT members have participated multiple times in this is a life-changing effort. Learn how you can help KERMIT at www.stchris.org/missions.htm.

The Church will rebuild the Gulf Coast. KERMIT, a joint ministry of Church of the Holy Apostles and St. Christopher's has led the way with their Mississippi partnerships.

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The Rev. Katrina Grusell, Rector
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Gulf Coast Relief

The Episcopal Regional Council of Washington County has been collecting items for Gulf Coast relief during the seasons of Epiphany and Lent. Member churches of the region responded to hurricane victims needs by collecting food, personal care items, supplies, new clothing and \$50 gift certificates. The Gulf Coast Relief program is under the aegis of the Diocese of Mississippi and coordinates on-going relief efforts as a result of last year's hurricanes. They have listed necessary items needed by the survivors as they recover from their catastrophic damage. "Want lists" from the Diocese of Mississippi are distributed to the churches and collection stations are located at each church. The supplies are shipped periodically.

A member of St. Mark's, Lappans, went on a mission trip with KERMIT in December. She has made presentations to many of the local churches and St. James School to promote this project. The items and offerings will be presented at the Great Vigil of Easter, a regional service held at St. John's, Hagerstown. It is anticipated that they will be transported to the Gulf Coast on a truck that is being sponsored through a local Church of the Brethren. The cash offerings will be sent to the dioceses of the Gulf Coast and other Episcopal-related relief agencies.

The churches of the Washington County Regional Chapter represented in this project include: St. Anne's, Smithsburg; St. Andrew's, Clear Spring; St. John's, Hagerstown; St. Luke's, Brownsville; St. Paul's, Sharpsburg; St. Mark's, Lappans; St. Thomas', Hancock; and St. James' School.

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Judy Potter, Regional Council President and Chair of St. John's Service and Outreach
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Aid to Mississippi

In an effort to provide relief to victims of hurricane Katrina, All Saints' Parish, Frederick, entered into a mission partnership with the Church of the Redeemer, Biloxi, to provide financial, spiritual and project support as they seek to rebuild the community of Biloxi and the church. The Church of the Redeemer, a coastal church, lost not only the entire church building and its contents, but the rectory as well. All Saints' is part of a consortium of churches across the United States who are in partnership with their sister parish in Mississippi.

A relief mission team was sent to Biloxi in January; plans for other 2006 mission trips include July 15-22 and November 6-13. General mission expenses are relative to the task the team is undertaking and is supported by parish fund raising. Thus far, members of All Saints' have sent Christmas packages to the entire congregation and donated money to help defray the cost of new chairs for the parish hall as well as provide relief teams.

The Reverend Kay Rice, Director, Mississippi Mission 2006
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New Orleans Connection

After New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast were ravaged by Hurricane Katrina, the Church of the Holy Comforter, Lutherville, embarked upon a mission to provide direct support and assistance to a sister church in that area. Several parishioners of Holy Comforter had lived near New Orleans and they offered to make contact with their former church to ascertain what could be done to help. From that seed, a rewarding partnership has grown between Holy Comforter and Grace Episcopal Church in downtown New Orleans.

Outreach efforts began by communicating with Grace's contact person on a regular basis, and then by sending Target gift cards, contributed by parishioners, for use by the church or its congregation. A pivotal point in this relationship occurred earlier this year when four women from Holy Comforter flew to New Orleans. For a week they did everything from tear down walls to scrub floors to remove debris. This incredible experience has heightened parishioners' awareness of the extent of our fellow Episcopalians' needs, and has strengthened their commitment to provide support and assistance well into the future. To carry on this work, Holy Comforter's rector, junior warden, and two parishioners will be going to New Orleans to continue the work of clearing, cleaning and construction.

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Rehab Homes and Build Friendships

Beards Fork, W.Va. is not found on most maps. It is a cluster of buildings in the heart of Appalachia. There is a one-lane road winding a path between mountains, several dozen homes, two abandoned churches and the Southern Appalachian Labor School (SALS).

Founded in the late 1970s, SALS seeks to provide services and improve housing conditions for disadvantaged residents of south-central W.Va. Many residents are former coal miners, struggling to make ends meet. The SALS program includes: weatherization of houses, minor and major repairs, and new home construction. There is also a work-study program for young adults and a day care center for children.

For the past three years, St. James' Parish, Lothian, has sponsored annual mission trips to SALS. This past summer 12 St. James' parishioners traveled to Beards Fork during the first week of July to help rehab houses and assist staff at the day care center.

Missioners tackled many projects, including drywall finishing, sanding, painting, laying insulation, installing plumbing, wiring, and working at the day care center. St. James' workers often worked along side work-study students who were learning a trade in construction while earning a G.E.D. Despite cultural differences, connections were forged and friendships made. Evenings were a time for group meals, local entertainment and fellowship. Participants have pronounced this annual mission trip a resounding success. Most look forward to returning to this beautiful, but remote, part of the country in the future to assist SALS with their efforts to enrich the lives of area residents.

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Dream Builders to "Blitz-Build" 4 Homes in One Week

In 2002, eight teens and four adults from St Mark's Church, Highland, traveled to West Virginia to work with Habitat for Humanity. By 2004, the annual mission trip had grown to 60 missionaries from four parishes, adding Church of the Ascension, Westminster; Trinity Church, Waterloo; and St. Peter's Church, Ellicott City. In 2005, under the name Dream Builders, the team of 80 missionaries flew to New Mexico to construct two homes in one week. This is known as a "blitz-build."

Working side-by-side with the new homeowners made an overwhelming impression, both on teen and adult missionaries. On the final day, a worship service and home dedication was held on site. When one of homeowners made a very emotional thank you speech, there wasn't a dry eye in the group.

The goal for 2006 was to rebuild homes devastated by Katrina, but planners learned that infrastructure is not yet in place for groups of their size. Therefore, Dream Builders plans to return to New Mexico to blitz-build four homes in one week. The 120 missionaries, age 14-75, maintains a ratio of two-thirds teens. In addition to the four parishes, 16 missionaries from Temple Isaiah in Fulton will participate. Daily worship will be led both by Jewish and Christian teams.

Missionaries pay their own way plus the \$10,000 materials cost per home. An anonymous donor has sponsored one home. Others, investing \$20 per "share" come to a "shareholder breakfast" to celebrate the mission's success in the fall. Last year one missionary, a filmmaker, created a stunning documentary of the trip. Many teens return each year, recruiting a friend, and some, now in college, will attend their fifth mission. To become a shareholder, E-mail stmarkshighland@yahoo.com. View the 2005 online slide show at www.stmarkshighland.com/photos/.

Lisa Ghessie, Project Coordinator
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International

It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.

- Isaiah 49:6

Around the World

Sisters of Charity

St. Paul's Church, Sharpsburg, formed its partnership with Sisters of Charity in the spring of 2003. Sister Miriam and Sister Mary Martha visited St. Paul's to inform the congregation of St. Vincent's Retreat House located between Shepherdstown and Martinsburg in W.Va. During this time a friendship was formed that resulted in the donation of altar linens, hangings, books for their library, etc. The Vestry held an all-day retreat at St. Vincent's Retreat House in October 2005.

Sister Miriam also spoke to the congregation concerning the sister's mission in Haiti with St. Vincent's Center for Handicapped Children, located in the center of Port au Prince, a city of 3 million people and one of the poorest and most densely populated cities in the world. This is a hospital, a school and a home that treats blind, deaf and physically-handicapped children. Since then St. Paul's has been supported this mission with monetary donations, clothing, medicines, furnishings, supplies, etc. Several parishioners had planned a two-week mission trip to Haiti to work in the clinics, but when the political situation deteriorated those travel plans were cancelled. This is an ongoing outreach and partnership program with Sisters of Charity. This project is supported by the whole congregation, but was spearheaded by the Episcopal Church Women.

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Heifer International

Heifer International is a non-profit organization devoted to helping impoverished people become self-reliant. They do this by giving a healthy animal or breeding pair to a poor family, who is then trained, by Heifer staff, to care for the animal. A dairy cow to a Philippine family can produce up to four gallons of milk a day; enough to drink, share, and sell at the market. The manure restores the garden. When the cow gives birth to a calf, the family then gives the calf to another needy family in order to pass the gift along.

In 2004 Dr. Andy Townsend, district representative of Heifer International, contacted St. Paul's Church, Sharpsburg, concerning this program. He visited the congregation and after two presentations St. Paul's became involved with Heifer International.

St. Paul's has pledged an "Ark," which includes two cows, two sheep, two camels, two oxen, two water buffalo, two pigs, two beehives, two goats, two donkeys, two trios of ducks, two trios of rabbits, two trios of guinea pigs, two flocks of geese, two flocks of chicks and two llamas. The congregation set and exceeded its initial goal of \$5,000. This was a congregational effort spearheaded by St. Paul's Vestry. Support of Heifer International is an ongoing outreach program.

Crystal Brown
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The Manchurian Mission

Dr. John Aldis, a member of St. Paul's Church, Sharpsburg, has provided funding and personal support to Dr. Zhang Xu, a quadriplegic orthopedic surgeon living in Northeast China. This Christian physician visited the congregation at St. Paul's Church in 2004, and he leads an active ministry to the many disabled people in his hometown Ahshan. Dr. Zhang's mission is rapidly expanding, and it needs continued support. This mission is supported by the Christian Leadership Exchange (www.cle-china.org/), which maintains an active involvement in the work of the Christian Church in China. Dr. Aldis has worked with several of the key personnel in that organization, and he has been impressed with their mission and the effectiveness of their approach.

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Commitment to Seafarers

The Baltimore International Seafarers' Center offers pastoral hospitality to homesick members of cargo ships' crews from around the world. Founded in 1993 by Brother Ed Munro, a deacon working out of his car for no remuneration, the center now operates a facility outside Fort McHenry and has two vans. They are a partnership ministry by nature, since no single entity provides the majority of its volunteer ship visitors or its funds (operating budget ~\$115, 000).

Congregations committing substantial volunteer hours and dollars include Old St. Paul's, St. James' Parish, Monkton, Church of the Redemption, St. David's Church, Church of the Holy Comforter, and Sherwood Church. St. Margaret's Church, Annapolis, and Church of the Redeemer recognize the importance of this work through grants. The Seafarers' Center is grateful to the diocese for \$12,000 per year, as well as the presence of Bishop Robert Ihloff and the Rev. Canon Mary Glasspool on its board. Lutheran congregations, the port community, and others also take part.

The center's greatest need is for prayers, to discern how best to serve the increasing number of seafarers cut off by new rules from phoning the families they can't see for 10 months. They also need expanded financial support, to reverse the deficit spending necessitated by the transition to a paid director; volunteer ship visitors; and office, public relations and computer help.

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At Home and Abroad

In the fall we were approached by the Rev. Michael Paul, representing a group of Sudanese who live in the Baltimore metropolitan area. The group was seeking space where they could meet for worship, Christian education, and fellowship under the leadership of Father Paul. Father Paul spoke to the congregation about the journey that brought both the individuals to the United States, and the group to St. Thomas'. Our vestry, working with the diocese, approved an agreement whereby our Sudanese brothers and sisters in Christ are able to meet here as they begin to build their worshipping community. On January 29, Father Paul was instituted as the vicar of the Sudanese congregation, which is now recognized as an unorganized mission of the diocese. Over 200 people came to support this fledgling worshipping community. We are honored to be able to share our space with our Sudanese friends.

St. Thomas' parish has been involved with The American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem (AFEDJ) since 2002. This organization is comprised of 500 American parishes and 7,000 clergy and lay people. AFEDJ provides humanitarian aid to residents of the Holy Land. By funding schools, hospitals, families and individuals, AFEDJ works to "do unto the least of these" in a land that is as alive with military tension as it is with history. The Rev. Charles Cloughen Jr., rector of St. Thomas', serves as president of this ministry, and the parish offers support in volunteer human resources.

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Supporting Honduras

For the past eight years Church of the Redeemer, Baltimore, has been in partnership with the Episcopal Churches in Atima and Santa Barbara in Honduras. Working in conjunction with the Very Rev. Jose Menzoda, Archdeacon, Redeemer has supported this ministry by building a church and multi-purpose building, constructing playground equipment, and painting and refurbishing classrooms. Each year missionaries run a primary-care medical clinic, bringing a team of fifty medical professionals and youth. The clinic offers emergency, ob/gyn and dental care, ophthalmology including cataract surgery, podiatry, rheumatology and pediatric care. Over the week 3,000 patients are seen. The latest work is supporting a grassroots economic development project to construct an efficient wood burning stove with a vent in each home in Atima. This extends the wood supply, which is costly, and reduces respiratory illness due to wood smoke.

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Honduran Mission

El Hogar de Amor y Esperanza is an Episcopal orphanage and school for boys in the Honduran capital city of Tegucigalpa. El Hogar Ministries and St. Margaret's Church, Annapolis, have a long history, initiated by the Rev. Wes Wubbenhorst, youth missionary for the diocese, as a result of his Peace Corp days in Honduras. This effort is currently supported by the Honduras Missions Committee of St. Margaret's. Three years ago, St. James' Parish, Lothian, joined St. Margaret's in sending volunteers to Honduras.

Working closely with orphanage administrators, the focus of the last two week-long mission trips has been to support the orphanage school. After arriving last summer, the team of 16 volunteers from the two churches divided into groups. The teachers' group planned and presented four days of workshops for the school's Honduran teachers, and supervised the purchasing of textbooks. A computer group investigated and purchased four new computers and Internet access for the orphanage. Another group sorted donations, filled backpacks and teacher bags with school supplies, and assembled books and educational materials for each classroom and the orphanage library. A fourth group planned and presented activities for the 77 boys who call the orphanage home. Finally, a support group cleaned the volunteer house and shopped for supplies, freeing other team members for planned activities.

By pooling financial resources, and with the help of some generous donations, the two parishes were able to purchase more than 300 current textbooks. For the first time every boy has a textbook for each subject. Special emphasis was placed on enhancing the science lab and mathematics class.

This annual mission trip is a life-changing experience for orphans, teachers and volunteers. The teamwork between the two parishes, with the assistance of the administrators of El Hogar, has resulted in a real synergy of outcomes and accomplishments. This amazing partnership is an example of how combining resources and talents can yield an ongoing mission of miracles.

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Espiritu Santo

St. Margaret's Church, Annapolis, has had a relationship with Espiritu Santo (Holy Spirit) Church, Tela, Honduras since 2001.

It began when parishioners Jim and Beth Knorr visited their daughter who was teaching at Espiritu Santo's bilingual school in March 2000. The following year they returned to Tela, residing there for three months. While volunteering their services, they formed friendships with several members of the church, school and community.

In June 2001, the first Youth Mission Team arrived in Tela and spent two weeks on distributing food and clothing, painting and planting palm trees. These visits have continued and the project list has grown.

While all involved have developed lasting friendships and learned about the Episcopal Church and the culture of the people in Honduras, the primary goal has been to develop Mutual Ministry. For example, St. Margaret's provides the finances for the purchase of large sacks of rice, beans and flour, which are purchased by Espiritu Santo. Then, both churches work together to fill small bags for distribution to very poor families in the rural areas and to deliver the food in the name of Jesus. Neither church could fulfill this ministry without the other.

Much of the funding for the projects comes from St. Margaret's endowment income and is approved by the vestry. However, missionaries are expected to pay their own expenses subsidized by fundraising. All parishioners are invited to participate by donating clothing and other items.

On January 22, the Knorrs attended the dedication of the new church for Espiritu Santo, funded by a United Thank Offering grant. They presented new altar hangings and clergy vestments as a gift from St. Margaret's. It is expected that another group will visit Tela this summer and that visitors from Tela might come to Annapolis.

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Devotionals on Demand

It began as a simple ministry. Place daily morning prayer, noonday prayer and Compline online for anyone to hear. The Rev. Dr. Chip Lee, who has a background in broadcasting, has been recording these inspirational prayers for downloading in his rural Garrett County office and putting them on his churches' Web site since September 2005. Lee is rector of St. Matthew's, Oakland, and vicar of St. John's, Deer Park.

In January the diocese installed a new server, upgrading the output to streaming audio and video of live and pre-recorded content via RealPlayer™ – including Lee's devotionals. This means no more waiting for files to download before hearing or seeing anything. RealPlayer is a free program that allows users to watch or listen to streaming or pre-recorded content through the internet.

With one e-mail, Lee expanded the daily devotionals audience to include members of the U.S. military worldwide. He contacted the Rev. Gerald J. Blackburn, director for military chaplaincies, on Feb. 19 simply asking him to “check out the links” and “if they meet with your approval, offer them to your chaplains so that they might offer them to the sailors and soldiers in their charge.”

On Feb. 26 military personnel began downloading MP3 files of the devotionals. Due to limitations on bandwidth, streaming audio is not available to the troops overseas; the files are formatted to meet the needs of the military and give all visitors to the Web site a choice of formats.

“We greatly appreciate being able to offer to all our chaplains and members of the Armed Services this helpful online access to the Daily Office as a convenient spiritual resource for personal and/or group use. It also serves as an important connection with our greater Episcopal Church family for those Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine, Coast Guard and civilian government personnel scattered around the globe, including those at sea aboard ships, those in rather remote military installations in such places as Iceland and Okinawa, as well as those in harm's way in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait,” said Blackburn.

Morning prayer is updated daily and noonday prayer and compline rotate seven versions by day of week. The devotionals run six to 16 minutes and are set to the Native American flute music of R. Carlos Nakai, by permission of Canyon Records, Phoenix, Ariz. The devotionals are posted on the Lee's churches Web site, www.episcopalchurcingarrettcountry.org, which can be accessed through the diocese home page, www.ang-md.org.

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Panama

Titus Presler, author of the Episcopal publication, *Horizons of Mission*, says God is the missionary at the heart of Christian mission. God is simply inviting us to engage in what God is already doing. Several years ago the Frederick Regional Council of Episcopal Churches was invited to accept the challenge of engaging in what God was already doing in the world. This call to serve Christ would move FRC first into a long-term partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of Panama and then into a relationship with its sister region, the Grand Region.

This relationship, now entering its third year, also includes the Panamanian Ministry of Health and the people of Nueva Arenosa. The purpose of the relationship is to bring the love of Christ to FRC's brothers and sisters in Panama through medical and construction support. The mission team offers a three-day family medical clinic, a pharmacy, visitation to the homebound, distribution of Home Health Care Kits, and construction projects as needed. New for 2006 are an eye clinic, first aid classes and a children's ministry.

The annual mission costs range from \$12,000 - \$15,000, depending on the medical services provided and whether there is a construction project or not. Funds are raised through FRC churches and through partial diocesan grants. This year JoEllen Nutter, R.N. and member of All Saints' Parish, Frederick, will relocate to Panama as a missionary of the National Church.

FRC participating members: All Saints' Parish, Frederick; Catoctin Parish, Thurmont; Church of the Transfiguration, Braddock Heights; Grace Church, Brunswick; Grace Church, New Market; St. James', Mount Airy; and The Gathering, Walkersville.

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African Medical Mission

For almost 10 years members of St. Peter's Church, Ellicott City, have been supporting Dr. Christopher McConnachie and his wife Jenny, RN, who have been providing medical support in South Africa for 22 years. Chris is an orthopedic surgeon who has developed an orthopedic surgical theatre at the main hospital in Umtata, South Africa. Jenny operates a clinic, day care center and HIV/AIDS education program outside Umtata in a squatter's camp called Itipini. Itipini consists of shelters built on the site of the old city garbage dump from materials available on the dump site.

A collection is taken each month for the support of Itipini and between \$300-600 per month is usually sent. A special collection is taken in the fall to provide tuition and uniforms for the children of Itipini to go to school. Approximately \$40 will support a child in the school for one year. On average \$2000-3000 is sent per year for the scholarship program.

About once every two years the McConnachie's make a trip back to the United States and visit the churches and organizations that support their mission. Members of St. Peter's have been graced by several such visits. People young and old consider a day with the McConnachie's one of the most enriching experiences of their lives. With stories and pictures, Chris and Jenny bring everyone into the world of Itipini and the hospital in Umtata. The church has chalices and veils made by the people of Umtata that are used constantly as a reminder of its connection to these extraordinary people and their work.

Last year Jennie Boyer, a vestry member and a nurse, spent a month at Itipini working with Jenny McConnachie. She now volunteers with African Medical Mission, Inc., based in Hendersonville, N.C., to raise awareness and funds for this vital medical mission. To contact African Medical Mission, Inc., E-mail amm@brinet.com or visit www.ammsa.org. This partnership in mission has touched the lives of everyone at St. Peter's, bringing them all closer to Christ and those he loves, the people of Itipini.

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An Unbreakable Bond

The Episcopal Church of Christ the King, Woodlawn, enjoys a continuing sister relationship with Tokyo All Saints' Church in Japan.

It started with a formal Companion Diocese relationship in the 1980s between the Diocese of Maryland and the Diocese of Tokyo. A few years ago the formal relationship was ended at the diocesan level, but the two sister parishes had formed such a strong bond that both congregations voted to continue it on an informal basis.

The purpose of the arrangement is mutual support and ministry. The congregations support each other with prayer, information, and friendship, enhanced with exchange visits and correspondence. Christ the King members furnish all the resources and costs needed for its part of the activity.

Nearly every year, on an alternating basis, exchange visits are made between the two parishes. Two years ago, members of Christ the King were honored to have visitors from Tokyo All Saints', including their rector, the Rev. Mary Shigeko Yamano. In October, four members are expected to help celebrate the 125th anniversary of Tokyo All Saints'.

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Church to Church

*Jesus unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:
“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.”*

- Luke 4:18-19

Advertising

The Church of the Advent, Federal Hill, and the Church of the Redemption, Locust Point, are near neighbors, just a mile apart. They are now entering their third year of joint publicity for services of Christmas and of Holy Week and Easter. Together they designed a joint advertisement and placed it in their local weekly, the *Baltimore Guide*. The headline reads: "The Episcopal Churches of South Baltimore invite you to celebrate Holy Week and Easter" (or "to celebrate Christmas"). Included in the ads are listings, in parallel columns, of all the services at each of the two churches. The half-page ad is run three-four weeks before Christmas/Palm Sunday, with a quarter-page reminder ad the week before.

At this point, the ad project is in the "name recognition" stage. However, the Rev. Annette Chappell, rector of Church of the Redemption, feels that the ads might be reminding her more peripheral members and drawing them back, rather than attracting newcomers.

As for Church of the Advent, the Rev. Christopher Keene, rector, reports that there has been an increase in attendance by new members since running the ads; mostly on Holy Days. In addition to the ads, Advent also hangs a large banner outside the church to attract new and fringe members. Keene has attributed the return of a few fringe members to the banner. Members of Advent work to retain, or at least keep in contact with, the new people that come on Holy Days as a result of the ads and have been fairly successful at that.

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The Rev. Christopher Keene, Rector
Church of the Advent, Federal Hill
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Guardian Angel

For more than six years, Church of the Redeemer, Baltimore, has been in partnership with the Church of the Guardian Angel, Remington. The Rev. Michael Stone and the Rev. Alice Jellema started this ministry. The parishes have shared in Lenten programs and Redeemer's youth music team has offered its leadership in worship at Guardian Angel. Members of Redeemer have helped Guardian Angel with holiday outreach projects and facilities improvements. Redeemer's outreach grants have supported the ministry of the clergy at Guardian Angel over the years in excess of \$50,000.

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St. Dysmas

St. Paul's Parish has had an association with St. Luke's Lutheran Church, both in Point of Rocks, for nearly nine years. Together with other churches in the area they have held joint yard sales and hosted lectures. Discussions are currently underway to form an Alpha Course for all churches in Point of Rocks.

In April 2005 St. Paul's hosted a lecture by the Lutheran minister of the Community of St. Dysmas, the Rev. Chad Kline. The Community of St. Dysmas is a Lutheran congregation within the Maryland correctional system, operating independently of the state government. The community is a member of Prison Congregations of America and operates on two levels: corporately it is ministry to the incarcerated, and personally it is about transformation. St. Dysmas has a presence in five Maryland correctional facilities and has a weekly average attendance of 50-70 people. The lecture was well attended by parishioners from both St. Paul's and St. Luke's, and Rev. Kline inspired both churches to aid in this ministry.

St. Paul's continues to collect unused cards and stamps for the prisoners'. St. Paul's also donated all proceeds from last summer's yard sale to the St. Dysmas Congregation.

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Worshipping Together

It could have been just a business relationship. Gospel Faith Baptist Church approached the Church of the Resurrection in 1997 because they were looking for worship space. Resurrection, a small congregation in East Baltimore, was looking for some extra income. We had space. Gospel Faith had money. It was a good match.

Both partners felt, and feel, blessed. Three years ago, Resurrection invited Gospel Faith to share worship during the Advent/Christmas seasons. Since then, we sing together, we pray together, and we share a festive meal together after the service. This year, the centerpiece of our worship was a charming re-telling of the Christmas story (from the Iona Community's *Hay and Stardust: Resources for Christmas to Candlemas*). The Rev. Henry Boulware, Gospel Faith's pastor, was a splendid narrator, and Resurrection's vicar, the Rev. Beth McNamara, got rave reviews for her role as the donkey.

The collaboration continues to grow. Both congregations are interested in more worship services, and we are considering a shared outreach program to support troops in Iraq. What we do doesn't cost much. But it means a lot to us, and we hope it pleases our Lord.

The Rev. Beth McNamara
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Shared Spirituality

Sherwood Church has an ecumenical relationship with its neighbor, Faith Lutheran Church, which is under the leadership of Pastor Greg Fetzer. The relationship with Faith started as a result of friendships of folks in both churches. The two churches share the Thanksgiving service and look forward to more ways of celebrating together, as well as resurrecting their combined church Bible Study. Current efforts focus on spirituality. Last fall, they co-sponsored a Taize Healing service and instituted a monthly spirituality program that is attended by people from both parishes.

The fledgling spirituality program was lay-initiated and came as a result of the realization that neither parish could support such an effort alone. The group of six to 11 people meets monthly at Sherwood and is facilitated by the Rev. Joanna White, rector of Sherwood. As the program grows other people will be brought in to lead as well. The group explores topics such as “Are you a tourist or pilgrim on the road of life?”, “Accidental Icons,” and forgiveness. The hope is that this program will inspire the combined communities to dig deeper in faith and form a central core of prayer.

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Without Walls

Without Walls is an alternative music and worship think tank comprised of musicians and technicians from churches throughout the diocese where a real sharing of ideas and talents takes place. Members of this worship team have led services – nicknamed the eU2charist - at St. Mary’s Outreach Center, St. Bartholomew’s Church in Ten Hills, Church of the Good Shepherd in Ruxton, All Saints’, Sunderland on a monthly basis, and at Clergy Conference. Thanks to the musical and technical resources we share, all of the members have benefited from the interaction, as have each of our individual programs. Without Walls has received a grant, and is in partnership with the Journeys Community and other progressive worshippers, to create and lead an alternative worship weekend at Claggett within the next year.

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Walk in Love

Walk in Love was born less than two years ago through the prayerful dialogue among seven parishes: Church of the Good Shepherd, Ruxton; Church of the Messiah, Baltimore; Church of the Redeemer, Baltimore; Memorial Church, Bolton Hill; St. Andrew's Church, Glenwood; St. Bartholomew's Church, Ten Hills; and St. Paul's Parish, Baltimore. The early discussions transformed authentic vision into a conference that could celebrate the life-giving practices of the Episcopal Church, while focusing on the powerful ways that God is at work in our lives and ministries as communities of faith.

The first *Walk in Love* conference, held last October at Redeemer, featured keynote speaker Diana Butler Bass, senior research fellow and director of the Project on Congregations of Intentional Practice, a Lilly Endowment funded research study of vital mainline Protestant churches, at the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Va.

Diana's forthcoming book, *The Wisdom of Practice: Christianity for the Rest of Us*, inspired the afternoon workshop focus on authentic practices: Hospitality presented by Arthur Sutherland; Healing presented by Barbara Crafton; Worship presented by Roger Ferlo; Community Formation presented by Graham Standish; and Witness presented by Judy Fentress-Williams.

The second annual *Walk in Love* conference is Saturday, November 18, at Redeemer and features keynote speaker the Rev. Dr. Luis León, rector of St. John's Lafayette Square in Washington, D.C. Luis will ground attendees with the theology of reconciliation to prepare us for the afternoon presentations of three models of reconciliation: South Africa's Truth & Reconciliation Commission, the Community of the Cross of Nails, and the reconciling ministries of the Episcopal Public Policy Network.

As the Episcopal Church moves through this stimulating, demanding time, we can *Walk in Love* to strengthen and connect our ministries and congregations so that we will be ready to respond to God's call for our life together.

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