



The Forward

Letter from the Bishop

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

I have news that will be difficult and disturbing for all of us in the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania. Within the past three months, I have learned about four women who have made credible allegations that, as girls, they were sexually abused by the late Bishop Donald Davis. Davis was bishop of our diocese from 1974 until 1991. Two of the girls were abused at our diocesan summer camp and the other two were abused repeatedly over time.

Sexual abuse in any form is abhorrent in any community, and as your bishop, I feel particular pain that one of my predecessors betrayed the trust and innocence of children. On behalf of the church, I offer an abject apology to Bishop Davis' victims, their families, and everyone whose trust in the church has been violated, and I ask for your forgiveness.

I cannot undo the grievous wrongs that Bishop Davis has done, nor take away the pain of his victims, but I can do my best to ensure that, from now on, this diocese will tell the truth and seek healing and reconciliation for those who have been harmed. That is why I am making this situation public and asking anyone else who may have been abused by Bishop Davis to come forward, publicly or confidentially, to me. The existence of four victims makes it possible that there are others, and we are bound as Christians to seek their healing. We are working closely with the Office of the Presiding Bishop to do so. I have talked directly with Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, and she supports my decision to speak with you about these matters.

I had no idea that Bishop Davis abused girls until I received a phone call on March 30, 2010 from a woman who was abused sometime between 1978 and 1980. I immediately began an investigation, and during that investigation, I learned of three other victims who had come forward in the past. I now know those victims' identities and that they wish to remain anonymous. I have learned that Bishop Robert Rowley, my predecessor, was aware of incidents of abuse as early as 1993 and reported them to the Office of the Presiding Bishop. My investigation also shows that Bishop Rowley met with victims and assisted in arranging counseling. As you may know, Bishop Rowley died in January of this year, just before I learned of this situation.

In early 1994, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning asked Bishop Davis to resign from the House of Bishops, in which bishops retain their membership even if retired; to refrain from any priestly or episcopal duties; to undergo pastoral counseling; and to see a psychiatrist. In assenting, he was effectively removed as a bishop of the church. However, his abuse was not made public.

If allegations of sexual abuse involving children against a living member of the clergy surfaced today, we would immediately contact civil authorities and begin canon law processes. I do not know why church leaders in the past handled this situation the way they did, though I know that several of the victims specifically asked that their situations not be made public.

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One Church of miraculous expectation under the Lordship of Jesus Christ equipping transformational leaders for transformational ministry through our missionary outposts — our congregations.

The Forward

Letter from the Bishop cont.

As the bishop of this diocese, I am deeply committed to the safety and well-being of everyone who attends our churches and diocesan programs. Our diocese had been working for more than a year to strengthen our misconduct policies and procedures when news of these past abuses came to light. The Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania is now a place where we make every effort to deal both responsibly and responsively with complaints and allegations of misconduct. We will make reports to the appropriate civil authorities when child abuse is suspected. All of our clergy, staff and volunteers who work with children are required to complete training called Safeguarding God's Children, and we are implementing a new misconduct policy, based on the model policy of the Church Pension Group.

Misconduct is a most serious violation of the sacred trust given by the Church to bishops, clergy, and church workers to care for and respect the dignity of the people of God. The church must be a place where people can come with the deepest wounds and vulnerabilities and be safe. Our churches must be places where children are nurtured and respected and cared for and never harmed or abused in any way. I regret deeply that this has not always been the case in the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania. As your bishop, I will do everything in my power to make sure that we seek God's healing and reconciliation for the women Bishop Davis abused when they were girls and that nothing like this ever happens again in our diocese.

Most Sincerely Yours in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe
Bishop, Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania

Editor's Note: If you have information about abuse that may have taken place or if you were a victim of abuse by Bishop Davis, please call the diocesan office at 814-456-4203 or email bishop@dionwpa.org. Any information passed on to the diocese will be confidential.

A Reflection on Luke 4:18-19

by the Rev. Canon Martha Ishman

"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."

As Luke tells the story, Jesus began his public ministry with these words which he had appropriated from the scriptures he loved. They are words of healing, hope and grace. They are words that define Jesus' ministry on earth, a ministry focused on God's reconciling love and the desire for all God's people to be made whole. This desire transcends any limited notions of what it means to be made whole—to be healed. Wholeness is the full and complete integration of our minds, our bodies and our spirit in ways that enable us to live in perfect relationship with God.

Through his actions and his pastoral letter, Bishop Sean is putting flesh on what this ministry looks like. Shame cannot hold us captive when truth is revealed. Sight is restored when hidden things are seen in a new light. Oppression is lifted when we are released from secrets. Whether we are referring to victims of sexual abuse or any other form of violence which we are capable of inflicting on our fellow human beings, restoration of wholeness is necessary. I believe with every fiber of my being that this difficult work does bring healing. I have witnessed it in my own life and in the lives of others.

Amazingly, God has called all of us to this life changing, transformational ministry. By virtue of our baptism, all are called to healing ministry, all are called to resist evil, repent, serve Christ in all persons, and respect the dignity of every human being. We may exercise this ministry by being vigilant in prayer. We may be called to advocate for the weak, the lonely or the voiceless. We may simply and faithfully do the hard work of reconciling one to another at the very grass roots of where we live. There are infinite ways to exercise this ministry given the infinite power and grace of the God we serve. Thanks be to God.

A Thank You to the Diocesan Family

by the Rev. Mark Juchter

I send my warmest thanks to you all on behalf of myself and the entire Juchter family. Your prayers, presence, calls and notes helped bless our time in May and June. It was amazing to see how many lives were touched by Deacon John, not just in the diocese but beyond. Thank you for your support as individuals and a diocese!

Update from the Diocesan Health Team by the Rev. Adam Trambley

As part of our efforts to improve our Diocesan minimum factor of *Convincing Lifestyles*, one of the goals set by the OQM team is to start at least three Life Transformation Groups (LTG) in our diocese. A Life Transformation Group is like an accountability group with a missionary twist. During the weekly LTG, participants ask each other accountability questions about their lives, agree on a significant passage of scripture to read over the next week, and pray for people who need to come into a relationship with Jesus and for an opportunity to invite them to join the LTG. As new people come into the LTG, the group multiplies into two groups to allow more new people to experience God through this ministry.



The LTG accomplishes three different goals. First, the participants hold each other accountable for acting like Christians in their daily life. Second, the LTG provides a means of evangelizing and discipling new Christians. Third, the LTG provides a way for us to experience the multiplication of small groups, a concept that can be essential for the growth of our churches. For more information, or to become part of a Life Transformation Group in your area, please contact the Reverend Adam T. Trambley at atrambley@gmail.com or 724-347-4501.

Editor's note: Included with the Forward this month is a template for LTGs to work from (below).

ViaCordis Life Transformation Groups (LTGs)

As a Life Transformation Group, we covenant to meet weekly for personal accountability in our spiritual growth. We will read passages of scripture each week prior to our gathering; we will focus on growing in holiness and spiritual maturity; and we will pray for one another and for unbelievers. Once our group of two or three people reaches four people, we covenant to multiply and form two groups so that others may come to know Christ and become established in the faith.

Structure of LTG meeting:

Ask one another the questions on the other side of this sheet.

Pray for one another and for unbelievers:

- o I pray Lord that you draw ____ to yourself. (John 6:44)
- o I pray Lord that you give me the opportunity, the courage and the right words to share the truth with _____. (Col.4:3-6)

Decide what biblical book you all will read between now and next week:

- o Recommendation: read a total of 25-30 chapters weekly.
- o Note: If it is a shorter book, read it a number of times. If it is a longer book, divide the reading into several parts.

LTG Conversation Questions

Describe your interaction with God this week.

- joys, struggles and breakthroughs with God

How did you share Jesus with others?

- by your actions
- by your words

What temptations did you face this week? How did you respond?

- sinful thoughts or behaviors
- examples: lust; greed; envy; dishonesty; gluttony; laziness; wrath; pride; etc.

What did the Holy Spirit teach you through your scripture reading this week?

- insights
- guidance

What next steps does God want you to take?

- personally
- with others

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Mission Trip to Honduras

by Dan Paulo

This past April 17-28 a group of seven men from St. John's of Franklin participated in a short-term mission trip to Honduras. The purpose of the trip was to support local missionary clergy and to provide assistance to poor rural families in Honduras.



The mission trip resulted from a long-term relationship between St. John's and the Rev. Barbara Boghetich, formerly a SAMS missionary and currently working with the Diocese of Honduras. Reverend Barbara serves as a priest for Iglesia San Lucas in the village of Delicias, near San Pedro Sula, Honduras.

In searching for a project that would provide meaningful support as well as develop relationships by allowing our team to work side-by-side with the people served, Reverend Barbara led us to Anglidesh, a social outreach arm of the Diocese of Honduras. Anglidesh coordinates several projects that match mission work teams with communities with specific needs.

After lots of communication and investigation, we decided that our preferred project would be to purchase the materials and assist in the construction of concrete stoves, latrines and water tanks for families in the village of Delicias. Anglidesh then worked locally to select the low-income families most needing those items.

Planning for the mission began in November 2008. The project was identified and the team recruited. Team members had to obtain recommended vaccinations several months in advance and make certain that their passports were current. While each team member committed to paying their own airfare and lodging expense, fundraising was necessary for project expenses. Parishioners from St. John's helped organize a spaghetti dinner and a car wash to support the project, as well as to purchase "shares" of the enterprise. Donations from individuals as well as from Holy Trinity Church in Brookville, the local Rotary Club, other area churches, and an outreach grant from the Saint Barnabas-Velma Moore fund allowed us to send money in advance for the purchase of construction materials and some team expenses (primarily the rental of a van and hiring a driver for transportation to and from our work site).

Team meetings were held to discuss cultural attitudes, goals and objectives, packing lists, and all the many details and logistics of group travel. The team was primed and ready to go in July 2009 and just several days before departure we were commissioned during a Sunday service in front of our congregation..... and then we learned about the best-laid plans of men! Just a few days before we were to leave there was a major political upheaval in Honduras and, with advice from the Bishop of Honduras that work teams do not come, our trip was indefinitely postponed.

As we waited to reschedule and the weeks turned into months, we ultimately lost two members of our original team due to work scheduling problems. The good news was that we gained two new team members who were available for the rescheduled mission. Eventually the political crisis simmered down and we were able to reschedule a new departure for April of 2010, nine months after our original date.

The team was re-commissioned on the altar, parishioners signed up to pray for the team during the mission trip and once again we were ready to go. Supplies were distributed to balance our luggage weight limits and the team arranged to meet at 2:30 am in the church parking lot on our d-day so that we could travel together to Pittsburgh International.

As with all planning, nothing ever goes smoothly, and our first hitch occurred before we started. Six of us met sleepy-eyed but excited at 2:30 am, but we were missing Bill. We phoned but got no answer and finally had to leave at 3 am in order to make our early morning flight. Bill would hopefully be able to catch us later.

Other than the missing man and the usual travel aggravations (having to go through a long security line again in Houston, a very tight connection and 3 of our 6 suitcases did not make the trip), we arrived in San Pedro Sula in midday



relatively unscathed. We spent our first afternoon just getting oriented and adjusting to the heat and humidity before our big week to come. We also received an e-mail from our missing man stating that he was following and would catch up with us by Sunday afternoon.

As Sunday was our first full day in country we decided to attend church in the village of Delicias where we would be working. About 10 miles outside of San Pedro Sula, but a world away culturally, the little church of San Lucas was where many of the families that we would be working with worshipped. We thoroughly enjoyed the enthusiasm of the Rite II service. Even though it was in Spanish the joyful singing plus the zestful passing of the Peace by the entire congregation made each of us feel welcome indeed.

Monday, our first workday, arrived warm and humid, as expected. After morning devotions and breakfast we stuffed our daypacks with extra bottles of water and loaded ourselves into our rented van and headed back to Delicias. As our average age was close to 60 years we were all a little concerned as to how well we would be able to adapt to the physical labor in the heat and humidity. Our first test came shortly after arriving in Delicias when we loaded our gear on our backs and picked up some extra tools and started walking up to the top of a steep ridge. It's fair to say that most of us were breathing heavily and had to stop several times on the way up that hill.



At the top of the ridge, we broke into teams of 2 and 3 men plus a local supervisor and began working in individual homes. The families where we worked had been charged with preparing the site for our projects and they stood by to assist if we needed anything. Our projects were to construct either an efficient cook stove, or a family water tank, or a sanitary latrine with a concrete cover, so we divided into a stove team, a water tank team and a latrine team. We soon declared ourselves as experts in each of our designated building trades, but were mindful that we were there not so much to do things "our" way but to learn from our hosts.

The benefits of the units we were building were many and they were widely desired by the people in the community. The stoves provided a hot cooking surface while requiring a very small amount of wood fuel and leaking no irritating smoke in the houses. The water tanks allowed the storage of water from a tap that only functioned for a short time each day and saved hauling water from a contaminated stream. The improvement of a sanitary latrine over using an open field was obvious. Anglidesh had screened the recipients and had declared that the income level in the area was so low that everyone in the village qualified to receive at least one stove.

The days were long (and hot). Did I say they were hot? However, each day the hill got (slightly) easier to climb. We looked forward to our lunch breaks and were served meals by the local ladies in the village. The afternoon heat was tough but gradually our completed projects started to accumulate. Originally we planned to work only Monday-Friday, but at the end of the week we were close enough to finishing all of the units that we had funded that the team voted unanimously to work an extra day. The end result? We proudly completed 4 water family water tanks, 11 sanitary latrines, and 15 fuel-efficient stoves.

We returned to our hotel Saturday night with a sense of accomplishment and quickly recovered and rehydrated. Sunday morning we were back at San Lucas for worship and this time were warmly greeted by the friends we had made during the previous week.



Shortly after the church service we left for our self-proclaimed reward and headed to the famous Mayan ruins of Copan, where we spent two nights and learned a little history while we relaxed in the tropics.

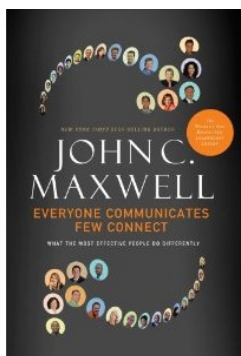
On our last day before our flight home we enjoyed meeting and discussing our project results with Bishop Lloyd Allen of the Diocese of Honduras. It was a cordial end to a very beneficial short-term mission trip for all concerned.

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Books Worth Reading

by the Rev. Adam Trambley

Everyone Communicates, Few Connect: What the Most Effective People Do Differently by John C. Maxwell



This easy-to-read and accessible book by pastor and leadership guru John Maxwell may be one of the most helpful preaching resources I have read in a long time. In clear language with lots of stories and examples, Maxwell discusses a wide variety of techniques to ensure that our messages actually make it the people we want to hear them. He sets out five principles of connecting, including emphasizing that connecting is something that anyone can learn, and then describes five broad connecting practices. The chapters on practices contain dozens of specific ideas and examples, any of which could be the difference between a nice sermon and a message that people hear and respond to with their lives. At the end of each chapter are concrete ways to apply his ideas in one-on-one situations, while working with a small group, or connecting with an audience (or congregation). If you want to read one book this summer that could improve your preaching, help you lead small groups studies, and develop your skills in individual ministry situations, *Everyone Communicates, Few Connect* would be a great choice.

Request for Artwork

by Shelley Huston

Christ Church Meadville invites artists in the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania to display/sell their artwork as part of the dedication of the murals in the Parish House. This has been a four year labor of love by Geraldine Hogan and a few helpers. Artwork may include paintings, drawings, lithographs, prints, collages, photographs (framed and matted), other framed artwork and fabric art. The celebration will be Friday, September 3, 5 pm to 9 pm and Saturday, September 4, 10 am to 5 pm. Applications and more information will be mailed to each parish, are available at Christ Church and by email from Shelley Huston ccalto@windstream.net.

From "Postcards from the Pew"

by Cheryl Mumford

"For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." - Jeremiah 29:11

Last night at the youth group meeting, one of the discussion topics was "your favorite Bible verse." Mine wasn't on the list.

I came across this scripture last winter, and I have clung to it ever since.



Repeatedly in my adult life, I've needed to trust God in His plan for me. I've had to remind myself that I do not know, and that I do not need to know the details of that plan. I need to trust Him to know, and provide me with what I need, when I need it.

It's hard, most of the time, to simply trust; even if it is God I'm supposed to be trusting.

I've spent the past months practicing letting go of my need to know, to control, to be in charge. I call it practicing because it's not easy for me to do that—and it has only gotten easier as I learn to take deep breaths and concentrate on actually letting go of the things I cannot—and don't need to—control. It's especially trying during those times when I find myself thinking (or saying) "If they'd only do it my way..."

The lesson I've learned, over and over, is that "my way" isn't really easier or better—it's just "my way".

Learning that lesson has shifted my focus to trusting God in all things—but especially trusting people I love to His plan "to prosper us, give us hope, and a future" too.

Editor's Note: "Postcards from the Pew" is a column that runs in Grace, Ridgway's monthly newsletter. This has been reprinted with their permission.

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Reminder - Annual Audits are due to the Diocesan Church Center by September 1st!

Pieces from Our Hundred Year History

Editor's note: The Diocese is celebrating its one hundredth anniversary this year. In honor of that, there will be pieces in each Forward that come from past newsletters. The first edition of a diocesan newsletter appeared in November 1915 under the title "The Diocese of Erie." Since 1915, the newsletter has been published off and on under different names.

From "Editorial" by the Rev. K. R. Wallron (from the September 1931 issue of "The Erie Churchman")

What is Churchmanship? Is it the way one conducts himself in Church? Is it the way a man argues about Religion? Is it the type of clothes a Clergyman wears on the street or the vestments he wears in Church? Is it the type of prayers he reads in the Services, or the books he reads them from?

What is Churchmanship? It is the way a Christian approaches his God through his Church. Every person is different. We have different temperaments; we think in various ways; we live our own lives, and my life is not like yours, nor yours like mine, nor our lives together like any other lives. God is not the same to any two people. He assumes the same attributes to all in a very general way, but that is all. We depend on our Faith for such dissimilar things. Nothing is strange about this, it is just as it is and ought to be. Worship is not the same to any two people. The services of the Prayer Book appeal to people in all sorts of ways. The spiritual reactions of the members of a congregation are never the same. They cannot be. God forbid that our people should ever become religious robots.

In worship, we render thanks, but mostly, we pour out our troubles, our sins, our weaknesses, and seek comfort and relief. There are many methods of doing this. Some need silence, that holy quiet with God, that comes from kneeling alone in His House. Some people find help in a simple service of prayer, reading from God's Holy Word, and instruction in the form of a sermon. Some find that help that their souls crave in a plain service of the Lord's Supper, with no ceremonial or even music, while others find such a service lacking in some of the things that they need, and which they find in a beautiful Choral Eucharist with ceremonial sanctified by centuries of usage.

What about all these varying conditions? What ought we to do about it? Should we try to force all people into one set form? Should we try to make every man and woman in the Church worship in the same way? God forbid! What a thing to try to do! We could as easily get all people to wear the same kind of clothes or eat the same kind of food or live in the same type of house or drive the same variety of automobile.

The Anglican Communion has one advantage over all other groups of Christians in the world. It provides in various Churches, the types of services, that meet the Spiritual needs of all sorts of people. This inclusiveness must be cherished and maintained.

Oil City or Franklin? (from the October 1923 issue of "The Diocese of Erie")

The excellent history of St. John's, Franklin, by our good friend, the Very Reverend Martin Aigner, D.D., contains a statement that some of the members of Christ Church Parish wish to respectfully challenge. This refers to the vested choir which was introduced in St. John's sometime after 1895, during the rectorship of Reverend Arthur Harner Judge, and which is claimed to have been the first vested choir, of men and boys, in Western Pennsylvania. Let it be known as widely as possible that Christ Church, Oil City, boasted a vested choir for a number of years prior to 1895, and in fact Oil City's vested choir journeyed to Franklin to assist at a wedding. We admit that St. John's began its parochial life many years before Oil City was even a settlement, but the vested choir is another matter.

A Question (from the December 1930 issue of "The Erie Churchman")

What would you do if you were a Mission Priest in charge of three congregations which required a round trip of 130 miles each Sunday—if they are all to have a service? What would you do if this Mission field included several villages where we have scattered Church people, and a large rural section where much work might be done among isolated and Churchless people?

What would you do if you had this job—and had no automobile, and had to live on the small salary which, also, so many of our Clergy receive?

Answer: You could not afford to buy a car. You know the Diocese cannot afford it. You put this item in the paper—and hope for the best. (This is an actual situation). "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

The Forward

Bishop Opens ECW Annual Meeting by Diane Pyle

Bishop Sean Rowe set the tone and scene for the Episcopal Church Women's Annual meeting held May 8 at St. James, Titusville. Assisting in the Eucharist was the Rev. Bill French and the Rev. Rebecca Lash. The focus of the day was prayer ministry. As diocesan representative for the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer, Diane Pyle told about her



journey learning to play the bagpipe, a spiritual journey, and related stories of Celtic beginnings of Christianity in England. Stories were further illustrated by pictures and bagpipe tunes.

Celinda Scott, Secretary of the national Anglican Fellowship of Prayer, presented the beginnings of this prayer ministry, including history of the Rev. Sam Shoemaker and his wife, Helen, who started the AFP.

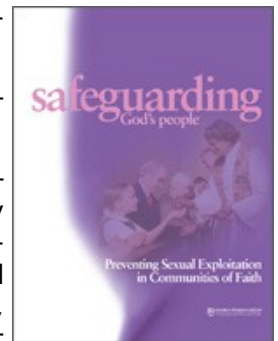
Reports of the various ECW committees were presented and approved. The annual fall retreat at Chautauqua will be the last weekend of September. For further information, contact Enid Bishop at 814-455-9601.

Safeguarding Trainings Scheduled

Two Safeguarding trainings have been scheduled for late this summer. Both training days will include Safeguarding God's Children in the morning and Safeguarding God's People in the afternoon. Lunch will be offered and will cost \$6.00 per person, payable the day of the training.

The first training will be August 14th from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM at Grace, Ridgway. The second will be August 21st from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM at St. John's, Sharon.

These trainings are particularly important for two reasons: this is the first time that Safeguarding God's People will be offered in the diocese and these trainings will be the only opportunity for your members to get trained before the start of the program year in September. According to diocesan misconduct policies and our insurance guidelines, those that need the trainings include: clergy, lay staff, vestries, and volunteers (whether that be office, youth, or outreach). People who have taken the training previously need to take the course again if it has been more than three years since the last training they attended.



To register for either of these events, please contact Vanessa at the Diocesan Church Center.

Province III Synod

Mo. Mary Norton (Grace, Ridgway & St. Agnes, St. Marys), Anne Bardol (Holy Cross, North East) and Jack Warner (Epiphany, Grove City) gather at the April 2010 Province III Synod meeting in West Virginia in service as diocesan representatives to the province. The meeting is held annually; this year's theme was Teaching Moments in Ministry. Mo. Mary is now the province's evangelism and congregational development ministries coordinator.



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If you have news, story ideas, or pictures that you would like to share with the diocese, please contact Vanessa at the Diocesan Church Center at 814-456-4203 or at vbutler@dionwpa.org.