January
2017

Province II Bishops
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For the President of the United States and all in Civil Authority

O Lord our Governor, whose glory is in all the world: We commend this nation to thy merciful care, that, being guided by thy Providence, we may dwell secure in thy peace. Grant to the President of the United States, the Governor of this State, and to all in authority, wisdom and strength to know and to do thy will. Fill them with the love of truth and righteousness, and make them ever mindful of their calling to serve this people in thy fear; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen. (BCP)
Out in our neighborhoods

From the Diocese of Albany
Live from Albany – It’s Tuesday Night!

In an effort to minister more effectively to all the youth sprawled across the Diocese of Albany, the diocesan youth ministry, Beaver Cross Ministries, is launching two new programs. The first, Tuesday Night Live, is the ministry’s new live stream Bible study. Youth ministry leaders are sent a Youth Ministry Guide via email each week that contains ideas for a meal, a game, and a link to the live stream feed. Youth groups across the diocese, or any youth from anywhere that want to join the fun, can then share the meal, play the game, and then tune in and study the word of God together! If the local Youth Group doesn’t meet on Tuesday night, the sessions are recorded for viewing whenever the Youth Group does meet. More information can be found at http://www.beavercrossministries.org/tuesday-night-live.html

The second initiative to reach the youth of the diocese is Surge. Surge events are a collaborative effort between Beaver Cross Ministries, a host parish, and other regional parishes. These events will take place approximately monthly in a different region of the diocese each month. At a Surge event, youth groups from across the region can gather for a night of fellowship, worship, and teaching. More information can be found at http://www.beavercrossministries.org/surge.html

From the Diocese of Central New York
How the Diocese of Central New York Used Facebook to invite 5,000 Central New Yorkers to Join Us for Christmas

By Meredith Sanderson

Has your church ever used Facebook ads to promote an upcoming event or share a special story? Facebook ads are an easy and cost-effective way to reach out to your community. Here’s how the Episcopal Diocese of Central New York used Facebook to invite 5,000 Central New Yorkers to discover God’s love with us in the recent Christmas season.

Step One: We identified a strategic goal.

Churches often find that Christmas and Easter (along with St. Francis Day and Ash Wednesday) are holidays that attract visitors who aren’t necessarily regular
churchgoers. Our goal? We wanted to invite those curious folks to check out their local Episcopal Church here in Central New York.

**Step Two: We focused on just a few tactics to help us achieve that goal.**

- We wanted people to be able to find a local Christmas service easily. To achieve that, we created a simple Christmas “landing page” on our website. The main feature of that page was a searchable map of Christmas services in the Episcopal churches of Central New York. Thirty-three of our churches participated by sending us information about their Christmas services. We hope that all 87 of our churches and chapels will participate next year!

- We used this fantastic invitation video from The Acts 8 Movement of The Episcopal Church as the core of a Facebook Ads marketing campaign. The ad had a “Call to Action” aligned with with our stated goal. Viewers were invited to click a link to “Find a Christmas service near you.” The ad (pictured at right) ran from December 16th through Christmas Eve. Facebook even allowed us to choose who would see it. We kept it simple and broad by focusing on people who lived in or were visiting Central New York. [http://www.acts8movement.org/your-free-parish-christmas-invitation-video-is-ready/](http://www.acts8movement.org/your-free-parish-christmas-invitation-video-is-ready/)

**Step Three: We observed the results!**

- 5,510 individuals saw the ad on Facebook (i.e., they were invited!);
- 2,900 individuals watched the video;
- 158 individuals responded to the ad’s call-to-action by clicking the link to our Christmas landing page, where they could use our simple map to find a convenient Christmas service.
- The Christmas landing page was our second most popular page in December 2016, and 68 percent of visitors to that page were visiting our website for the very first time. This means we achieved our stated goal of reaching out to the people we don’t see regularly in church—people who might be learning about the Episcopal Church in Central New York for the first time!

*The cost of the whole campaign?* Apart from a $40 one-time fee to purchase the map feature for our website (and we’ll use it again and again) the whole campaign cost just $84.99, or 54 cents per click to our website.

**Step Four: What can we do differently next time?**
Since this was our first diocesan-wide online invitation campaign, we know we have a lot to learn. Here’s some of the conclusions we drew, and some things we’re going to try for our next campaign:

- Video subtitles are really important. We all know that subtitles make our video messages accessible to the deaf and hard-of-hearing. But get this: Facebook told us that 94% of our viewers watched our ad with the sound off. So we’re super-grateful to the folks at Acts 8 for providing subtitles in their video!
- Facebook ads do work. We saw a significant increase in website traffic from Facebook in December, and the majority of those visits were from new users.
- Next time, diversify. The average view time for our 60-second ad was just 6 seconds. Next time do a similar campaign (at Ash Wednesday or Easter), we’ll consider doing several different kinds of ads—perhaps a shorter video or a catchy graphic in addition to the longer video—to see which type of ads perform best with the folks we’re trying to reach.

From the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe

Refugees in Wiesbaden

Welcoming the Stranger at St. Augustine’s is one of their outreach ministries.

Many people know the former American Arms Hotel. Just up the road from St. Augustine’s. It used to be a place where military new to Wiesbaden spent the first few weeks with their families while waiting for more permanent housing.

Today’s inhabitants of the large building with its characteristic star shape are also waiting. They are waiting for their status as refugees to be recognized, for their asylum applications to be processed and for their lives to return to something approaching normality. And they are waiting to be sent to a more permanent accommodation.

Our new neighbors have arrived a couple of months or a few weeks ago, having been transferred from Gießen, the Hessian central registration for refugees. They come from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Eritrea, and a third of them are under age.

One of our projects is MUSIC NIGHT for young adults. We have also supported the language courses at the center financially with €250 from the Mission Sunday collection. Some of the residents are calling in and attending services/Kaffeeklatsch or just using our church for a moment of prayer. We try to welcome them and engage them in conversation. There are opportunities for individual volunteers – especially teaching (basic) German or playing and working with children (20% of the 432 residents are 10 or younger, 11% between 11 and 17).
From the Diocese of Haiti

*Reparations for Haiti?*

In an article in *Jacobin*, an online news magazine, [https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/01/haiti-reparations-france-slavery-colonialism-debt/](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/01/haiti-reparations-france-slavery-colonialism-debt/), the author, Westenley Alcenat, writes about the demand being made by Haiti that the French Government return “some of what was stolen.”

From the article:

For a brief moment recently, Haiti dominated the news cycle. As always, this American media attention only came in a moment of crisis.

According to the Washington Post, local Haitian officials reported that Hurricane Matthew, the region’s most dangerous Category 4 storm in nearly a decade, killed at least 900 people, destroyed livestock, and wreaked havoc on farmers’ crops. The storm flooded rivers, leveled bridges, and in some towns, 80 to 90 percent of homes were destroyed. In the hurricane-ravaged south, 500,000 people were stranded and 30,000 homes have been destroyed. UN officials reported some 800,000 people are facing food insecurity, including 315,000 children.

As unavoidable as a natural disaster seems, Hurricane Matthew was also a human-made catastrophe, the cumulative effect of five hundred years of environmental degradation before and after French colonialism. Haitians know — even if the rest of the world forgets — that every rainy season brings a potential humanitarian crisis.

And yet, the global response has been the same as usual: rather than examine how the complex intersections of history, politics, economics, and ecology conspire to make Haiti susceptible to natural disasters and epidemics, journalists, pundits, and NGO operatives instead shift blame onto Haitians themselves. They present Haitians as a people incapable of managing their nation. This view has guided the international response to Haiti since its independence two hundred years ago.

Read the whole article here: [https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/01/haiti-reparations-france-slavery-colonialism-debt/](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/01/haiti-reparations-france-slavery-colonialism-debt/)

From the Diocese of Long Island

*Diocesan Episcopal Church Women distributed nearly $27,000 in 2016*

It is with great pleasure that the Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese of Long Island announce the granting of $26,850 to various ministries, both domestic and international. Over the years the ECW has been charged with the responsibility of managing memorial trust fund gifts bequeathed by generous, dedicated Christians of our diocese.

The recipients are diverse and the amounts granted vary. 2016 grants have been distributed to Episcopal Relief and Development; The Mercer Library; Seamen’s Church Institute; the
Cathedral of the Incarnation; St. Paul’s, Roosevelt Breakfast Program; food ministries at Christ Church, Babylon and St. Mary’s, Ronkonkoma; Camp DeWolfe; Our Little Roses Mission, Honduras; El Hogar Ministries in Honduras; St. John’s Hospital Pastoral Care Program. They have additionally provided for scholarship funds at two Episcopal colleges and granted scholarship money directly to two Episcopal women from the Diocese of Long Island.

Each year the finance committee of the ECW Diocesan Board meets and reviews requests. The recommendations are then presented to the full board for approval.

Applications for the 2017 grants may be obtained at this link: ECW Memorial Trust Fund Grant Application [http://www.dioceseli.org/download_file/view/734/](http://www.dioceseli.org/download_file/view/734/). The deadline for submission is April 1, 2017.

Information submitted by Barbara Taylor, Finance Committee Chair of the Diocesan ECW. Any questions about the grant may be directed to Ms. Taylor by email or phone: (718) 525-2992.

From the Diocese of Newark

*We’ve Redesigned our Convention:
What to expect at Convention 2017: Joining God in Shaping Our Future*

*From the Bishop’s Blog: Signs of God’s Grace*

At our 2016 Diocesan Convention I named a reality that seems to have resonance across the diocese. I said that business as usual is no longer an option.

In that address I identified a core question: How do we go on a journey together, to discern what God is up to in our neighborhoods, and then join God there in that work?

I believe – we believe – that God is inviting us into a new way of living together and this core question guide us on the journey.

We've been on this journey for several years, but in the last year the journey has speeded up, and more and more people have been engaged.

An important next step in our journey will happen at our Diocesan Convention later this month on January 27 and 28 – and all interested diocesan members, not just deputies, are invited to join us. Watch the video [<https://youtu.be/DatUiVLMKY>](https://youtu.be/DatUiVLMKY) (time: 4:19) to find out what will be different and what we hope will come out of Convention.
From the Diocese of New Jersey

Over 100 come together to pack meals for those in need.

Over one hundred youth and adults from more than 25 congregations came together on December 16-17th at Trinity Cathedral in Trenton to pack meals for those in need.

They worshipped, made music, and worked hard at the Stop Hunger Now Lock-in. Francis (Fran) McKendree, a North Carolina based musician, had even the teenagers dancing, laughing, and joining in singing the music which began the night. A service of Holy Eucharist followed, celebrated by The Rev. Ed Zelley of St. Luke’s, Metuchen, with accompaniment by McKendree.

Over the last five years, over 130,000 meals have been packed and distributed, each meal feeding a family of six.

M, a 9th grader from All Saints’, Navesink attended the event for the first time. Attending the lock-in was a fun way to get her school community service hours finished.

The event was coordinated by The Rev. Dcn. Debi Clarke, Canon Missioner for Youth and Young Adult Ministries. For more information about Youth Ministry in the Diocese, visit newjerseyouth.org.

From the Diocese of New York

Pokémon Go…To Church

By Valinn J.V. Ranelli, from The Episcopal New Yorker

On a recent Sunday at Holy Trinity Inwood, I found myself suppressing the impulse to laugh in response to the two words with which Father Jake Dell opened his sermon. I think most readers will agree that they would have found themselves hard pressed to have any other reaction when I reveal that those words were “Pokémon Go.” Pokémon Go is the first popular augmented reality mobile game. Its gameplay is carried out in the “real world” of the player's surroundings. Through GPS and mobile devices' cameras, characters appear in the landscape on the devices' screens. The main goal is to collect as many “species” of “pokémon” as possible, but players can also “battle” their creatures against each other at pokémon “Gyms”—centers often frequented by large numbers of players.

The software company that created the workings of the game appropriated as the Gyms locations from an earlier augmented reality game called Ingress. This resulted in a problem that only became apparent with the overwhelming popularity of Pokémon Go. The sites were selected based on the frequency of location tagged photos on photo-sharing websites. The most-tagged places were heavily-frequented public locations, among them many churches.
In the weeks following the game's U.S. release, the grounds of our church were inundated with Pokémon players and Father Jake found himself having to address the problem of numerous uninvited strangers in our church garden, some of whom responded unpleasantly when asked to leave. Although annoying, this experience provided the basis for perhaps the best sermon I have heard him give, positing the question of how augmented reality is creating a culture of distraction. Referring to Neil Postman's 1985 book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, he expounded on the world of digital technology, and now augmented reality, as a development of the entertainment culture that Postman identified with the advent of television as the beginning of the end of our society. In our digital world, these distractions can now be with us constantly, stored in our pockets so that we may go through life with minimal contact with non-electronic stimuli. Now that this screen world has been superimposed over our “real” world, the parameters of reality blur further.

In this new world of hyper-distraction, is there anything that may help us begin to retrieve ourselves from it? I believe the answer to this question is “yes.” The post television entertainment culture has progressively removed from human society two of its most crucial attributes: spirituality and community. It could even be argued that without spirituality, there is no humanity and without community, there cannot be society. With the advent of mobile technology, people have been further isolated from human interaction, diminishing the opportunity for these elements even more. Ironically, by integrating the physical and virtual worlds, the augmented reality of Pokémon Go may provide an avenue by which we may offer people a return to community and spirituality.

In his sermon, Father Jake mentioned that he could imagine some of his colleagues in the clergy using the presence of Pokémon Go players at churches as an opportunity to introduce them to the benefits that the church could offer. Intrigued by this, I proceeded to research whether this was actually happening, and found that indeed it was, at churches across the nation. A few minutes of searching yielded witty signs with sayings like “So you found a pokémon! Do you know the joy of finding Jesus?” and my personal favorite: “Recharge your phone outside, recharge your soul inside.” Articles also abounded with advice for church officials seeking to encourage the throngs of people now populating their church grounds to come inside. Most suggested a multi-step approach, first welcoming the players by providing snacks, water and a place to charge their devices, then attempting to connect with them by learning about the game to facilitate conversation, and finally informing them about the church and its benefits, taking the opportunity to dispel misconceptions held by the non-churchgoing public.

The best point that was made, however, was that Pokémon Go appeals to people in whose lives something is missing, whether or not they are aware of it. Many if not most of us are drawn to distractions such as Pokémon Go as a refuge from our fractured modern world, in which there is so little tangible purpose: a world created in large part by the rise of the entertainment culture itself. These people, therefore, stand to benefit a great deal from both the stabilizing spirituality and concrete human community offered by our churches. In this manner, thinking hopefully, we may attempt to lead them out of the dark forest of distraction and begin a return of our species to the realm of the real. We must also examine in all of ourselves the parts that have been pulled away from the real, and what our responses should be in order to strengthen our human connections.

We can start by treating those who appear at our churches to play Pokémon Go not as a nuisance, but as people in need of help that we are amply able to provide, and as an opportunity
to reach out to them and give them that help. This outreach stands to benefit the players themselves, through the spiritual and cultural support they may receive by interacting with or joining our church communities; the church communities, as they gain an avenue toward increased interaction with their surrounding communities; and society as a whole as we work to restore real world interaction and community participation. So go out, say hello, and ask not what the hordes of new faces can do (or refrain from doing) for your church, but what you and your church can do for them.

*The author is a member of Holy Trinity Church, Inwood in Manhattan*

**From the Diocese of Rochester**

On Dec. 9, current and former diocesan staff joined clergy and lay saints of the Diocese of Rochester to celebrate and give thanks for Diocesan House. The house, 935 East Avenue, has served as the diocese’s headquarters since 1954. The building has now been sold, and the diocese will relocate its offices to a space at St. Peter’s, Henrietta, in January, kicking off a period of discernment about our new long-term location. This was a moving gathering of several dozen people who came to laugh, cry, and remember years of ministry practiced within this beautiful building. At the end of the service, Bishop Prince Singh, the Rev. Canon Johnnie Ross, the Rev. Ruth Ferguson, and the Rev. Chris Streeter led the de-consecration service for the building’s chapel.

**From the Diocese of the Virgin Islands**

*All Saints’ Cathedral School Alumnus Honored*

Congratulations to Jelani Nelson, alumnus of All Saints Cathedral School, St Thomas, Virgin Islands. Jelani Nelson, Assistant Professor Computer Science at the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS), has received the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers.

Nelson is among 102 scientists and researchers who received the award, which is the highest honor bestowed by the United States government on science and engineering professionals in the early stages of their independent research. Awardees are selected for their pursuit of innovative research at the frontiers of science and technology and their commitment to community service as
demonstrated through scientific leadership, public education, or community outreach.

“I congratulate these outstanding scientists and engineers on their impactful work,” President Obama said in a statement. “These innovators are working to help keep the United States on the cutting edge, showing that federal investments in science lead to advancements that expand our knowledge of the world around us and contribute to our economy.”

Nelson, who joined SEAS in 2013, focuses his research on the development of efficient algorithms for massive datasets. Using a technique called "sketching," it is possible to create a very compressed version of a dataset that lacks all the detail, but still provides sufficient information to answer queries with high accuracy. His methods can be applied to streaming data and leverage methods from computational algebra and statistics. The applications of this work are diverse, and include computer vision, astrophysics, systems biology, networks, and the digital economy.

“Jelani Nelson is developing algorithms that enable questions to be asked of mountains of data while storing all but a grain. By making the impossible possible, Nelson’s research expands the frontier of scientific advances that can come from working with data,” said David C. Parkes, George F. Colony Professor and Area Dean of Computer Science. “It is thrilling and inspiring to see his breathtaking talent honored through this award.”

Nelson, who was named a Young Investigator Award Recipient by the Office of Naval Research (ONR) in 2015, also recently received a prestigious ONR Director of Research Early Career Grant. The $1 million award, presented to the top Young Investigator Award recipients, will fund his research into the use of sketching methods for high-dimensional data analysis.


From the Diocese of Western New York

St. Peter’s Welcomes Niagara Mass Mob

Niagara Mass Mob invited everyone to join in its first ever Mass Mob at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church on Sunday, January 8th at 10 am. It was a bracing service.

It was 15 degrees with the wind chill -18 coming off the falls. It was the inaugural event for Niagara Falls “Mass Mob.” 75 people showed up for the Eucharist at St. Peter’s, most of them visitors. Our elderly boiler chose this day to go on strike, spewing water from both ends.

Like the Anglicans we are, we pressed on. It was a great day! Everyone kept their coats on. Fr. Doc preached quickly, and well. The kids were chilled. We met many new
people and saw others we had not seen in years. After a bracing service, many folks continued the celebration at Third Street Retreat, a local pub just across the parking lot.

Like its Buffalo parent, Niagara Mass Mob aims to bring awareness and financial support to our community’s historic churches. Rather than a “tourist attraction,” Mass Mob wants people to see the church being used in its intended purpose—as a living, breathing community.

“A quirky community of faith, celebrating in the midst of everyday adversity,” observed Fr. Doc. “It might have been a little more reality than people had counted on, but this is who we are.”

View additional photos and access news links on St. Peter’s website <http://www.stpetersniagarafalls.org/mass-mob-niagara.html>

**Opportunities and Events**

Applications are now accepted for the 2017 Roanridge Trust Award Grants from the Episcopal Church.

The Roanridge Trust Award Grants are provided annually for creative models of leadership development, training and ministries in small towns and rural communities across the Episcopal Church. Dioceses, congregations and Episcopal-related organizations and institutions are invited to apply for the grants which generally range from $5,000 to $20,000.

Application deadline is Feb. 3

More information, the application and instructions in English are here http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/roanridge-trust and are in Spanish here http://www.episcopalchurch.org/es/page/fundaci%C3%B3n-roanridge

Applications are now accepted for Conant Grants from the Episcopal Church for the 2017-2018 academic year.

Conant Grant funds are provided for the improvement of seminary-based theological education. Specifically, the grants are directed for the support of research, writing and course development undertaken by faculty members at the recognized Episcopal seminaries in the United States.


Deadline for submitting an application is Friday, Feb. 10.

See more opportunities and event on the Province II website: http://www.province2.org/opportunities—events.html