Dear Friends in Christ,

A 5th century bishop wrote, "Let us use fasting to make up for what we have lost by despising others. Let us offer our souls in sacrifice by means of fasting. There is nothing more pleasing that we can offer to God, as the psalmist says; 'God does not despise a bruised and humbled heart.'" He goes on, "Offer your soul to God, make an oblation of your fasting . . ."

Beloved, what if our focus during this season of Lent was an offering up of that interior place where we meet God:
our very souls, our heart of hearts? This is the place that resides deeper than your thoughts and your emotions, the place where you are you the most. What if that place became an offering to God?

And what kind of fasting would bring this about? Sacrifices of food, TV, or other pleasures we would miss. We may sacrifice the attachments that we notice have become idols, to be torn down, for they have taken a place in our inner lives that belongs only to Jesus. Holding our souls in light of his presence unafraid, resting in his love, and waiting for his response to our prayers is how we make this offering to God.

The bishop I mentioned above is Bishop Peter Chrysologus (born 424 AD in Ravenna and died in 450 AD). Around this kind of fasting and offering St Peter Chrysologus says, "Add to your fasting, Mercy. Fasting bears no fruit without being watered by mercy. . . Mercy is to fasting as rain is to the earth. However much you may cultivate your heart, clear the soil of your nature, root out vices, and sow virtues, if you do not release the springs of mercy, your fasting will bear no fruit."

What are the disciplines that will help us get to the place where we regularly offer up our souls to God and release our lives into the practices of Mercy? Do we enter Lent thinking about what vices need to be rooted out? Are we meditating on the virtues that need to grow in our lives?

We are called, in the great tradition of the church, to give ourselves to keep a Holy Lent.

Today God is waiting for us to ask for His mercy afresh in our souls, so that our lives may overflow with mercy.

A Blessed Lent to each of you this year,

+BILL
PRAYER CORNER

The following was written by The Rev. Cinnamon Creeden, vicar of Christ the King Anglican Church in Biddeford Maine. She recently returned from a trip to Nigeria, where she was able to minister to and with several Anglican priests under the invitation of Archbishop Ben Kwashi at a clergy conference. We are thankful for her work here in New England and for her faithful representation of Christ among our Nigerian brothers and sisters.

The whole team came together in Abuja. In the picture above (from left to right) is Casey, Bishop Joseph, Guy, Glen, Mama Josephine, and myself. We took a fascinating (though sleepy) 5 hour van ride to Jos. What I noticed about Nigeria are the dwellings and "shops"; being semi-arid, there is very little wood, and they build with bricks made of the clay like soil, and use metal for roofing. But if you look at the people, they are healthy, well-fed, bright eyed, smartly dressed, and you still see many cars and smart phones!

Continue to pray for the ADNE and the resources we need to do the work God has given us to do.

Pray for Bishop Bill, for protection and wisdom in all his work, and that the Lord would guide him in his ministry through this Season of Lent.

Pray for the Council of Canons: Alex Cameron, Ross Kimball, Andrea Mueller, and Susan Skillen.

Continue to pray for St. Timothy's Anglican Mission (Burlington, VT), Church of the Good Shepherd (Forestdale, MA) and All Saints Anglican Church (Attleboro, MA) as they search for new rectors.
Arriving in Jos, we were taken to the Archbishop Kwashi's office for greetings. They figured out that it was my birthday and greeted me with a cake, which made me laugh. We were brought to our hotel, which was very nice (we were not roughing it as missionaries). Our next days were spent team building and praying through the conference. We went twice to the Christian Institute for their graduation celebrations. The clergy are mostly very young and many have children. We met Susan (see photo), an amazing British woman who has been in Nigeria for 30 years. She is Dean of the Institute, and the Archbishop's assistant in the diocese. They are building a dorm on the property, and she worked with the students during their week of "break" to make 9,000 heavy bricks. She is a wonderful combination of humility, British reserve, passion for God's work, and love for the clergy, who all come through there as students.

On Sunday, we all went to preach at different churches. I was happy to be going with Rinji (see photo), the Archbishop's son whom I met last summer in Kansas City and whom I like very much. We went to "Church of the Advent," one of Rinji's churches. I preached on John 9, "the man born blind." I did a first person narrative, shared personal testimony, and gave an altar call for people to renounce the lies of the Enemy that have been spoken over their lives (the man born blind was supposedly "born in sin and cursed by God"). I got to pray with a number of people. One in particular spoke of a sin in his childhood that he had repented of but still felt was blocking him from really being used by God. He was fasting and doing everything he could to "break through it." Together we renounced the shame and condemnation attached to that sin and embraced the forgiveness that Jesus won for him on the Cross. I pray that he is truly free.

That night, we went to the Bishop's court for dinner with Archbishop Ben Kwashi and Mama Gloria Kwashi. In addition to their four grown children, they have 60 orphans whom they have adopted who live with them. I don't know how they do it, but they do it very gracefully.
Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the forty days of Lent. Christians have been preparing for the celebration of Easter by walking through a "Holy Lent" since ancient times. This is patterned after Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. Lent is a season of repentance, fasting, and self-reflection. Of course, all of this happens with the sure knowledge of God's love and grace to us through Christ. Lent and Ash Wednesday are in no way about condemnation. They are a time in which human beings, given a pronouncement of forgiveness and absolution through Christ, can be honest with God, with ourselves, and with each other. With the terror of judgement removed, we can speak truth. Ash Wednesday is the day in which Christians gather to receive the imposition of ashes.

The clergy/spouse conference was held at "Zambiri." Zambiri means "life is not an accident" and is a school that Mama Gloria started and runs. There are more than 400 local children at the school, who live in difficult circumstances. They eat lunch at Zambiri, and for some, it is the only daily meal they get. It is an amazing Kingdom work they are doing as they pour value and the knowledge of God's love into these kids. Please keep Zambiri and Mama Gloria in your prayers.

The 3 ½ day clergy/spouse conference started Tuesday morning. It had 2 themes: strengthening marriages and empowerment by the Holy Spirit. Their marriages were celebrated in several ways. On the first day, they were assigned to write love letters and read them aloud to one another that night. Those who did it returned the next day beaming, saying things like, "She has never said those things before. I never knew she felt that way!" Then the wives all brought small gifts for their husbands and had them come up one by one (this involved singing and dancing) to receive them with some display of affection. This was cute and funny, as Nigerian Christians are incredibly bashful about public affection. On the last day, we provided a big wedding cake, and each couple rededicated their marriage and fed one another cake. We saw a real change in the dynamics with couples through this community celebration of their marriages.

As for empowerment by the Holy Spirit, we gave several talks and prayer times about "preparing the way" for the Lord through repentance, forgiving others, and removing other obstacles. Woven through all of that was a series of Bible teachings by Bishop Joseph about the Holy Spirit. By Thursday morning, there was so much anticipation and hunger to be filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit. Bishop Joseph asked the Holy Spirit to come, and it was like a torrential rain for 10 minutes. That we know of, there were 2 physical healings, 4 people received the gift of tongues, and there was one deliverance from evil spirits. I think many more things happened, as the Holy Spirit ministered to...
The Sign of the Cross

Why do Anglicans make the sign of the cross? When do they do it? How do they do it?

I serve in the South, so usually it's, "Why do ya'll cross yourselves?" Often this is followed by "Isn't that superstitious, like the baseball players who sign themselves before batting? Isn't it a dead, rote ritual?"

Sometimes folks don't feel it's rote or superstitious, but they wonder why and how to make the sign. And that's why Anglican Pastor is here! We want to try and answer those kinds of questions, so here we go: <<<Continue Reading>>>

Overall, we believe that the diocese of Jos was strengthened and encouraged. It is the Archbishop's strong desire, as his retirement approaches, that Jos would be on mission throughout Nigeria and the world. Amen. Let it be so!

EPISCOPAL VISITS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 17 - It was a busy weekend for Bishop Bill Murdoch, with our diocesan Standing Committee meeting on Saturday, coupled with a visit to two churches on Sunday. Busy at it was, there was a lot of excitement about what God was doing, both in the church at large and in the two congregations currently pastored by Fr. Christian Huebner.

Bishop Bill's first Sunday visit was to Brownsville Community Church, a United Methodist congregation that meets in a Vermont town just over the New Hampshire state line. The Rev. Huebner was hired to be their pastor last year, and since his installation, the average Sunday attendance has tripled. Bishop Bill preached on 1 Corinthians 12, on the "same Lord, the same Holy Spirit that inspires gifts as He wills", encouraging the congregation to seek and practice walking in the Spirit, particularly for healing as a way to see the Gospel of Jesus Christ in action among His people.

After the first service, Bishop Bill was off to Grace Anglican Church in Newport, New Hampshire, an Anglican mission plant. He, Fr. Christian, and the leaders at Grace were able to meet and talk about reassessing the mission's location as they begin the search for a new strategic site, possibly in Claremont, NH. Bishop Bill again preached on 1 Corinthians 12 and celebrated Holy Communion. During coffee hour he was able to visit with the whole congregation and experienced first hand their heart for serving the Church and reaching their community.
Please pray for Fr. Christian Huebner and his family as he continues to pastor both congregations; pray for the Brownsville Community Church (UMC) and for Grace Anglican Church, that the Lord inspires them and empowers them to reach their communities, and that He adds to their numbers daily.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31 - Last Saturday, Bishop Bill visited All Saints', Attleboro and met with their Standing Committee and Vestry, helping them prepare to write a parish and rector profile for their new rector search. All Saints' is entering a period of transition as this process begins, and it was to that transition Bishop Bill wanted to speak, especially as they face losing The Rev. Dr. Lance Giuffrida as head rector. He will be stepping down and taking on an emeritus role in the parish, once a new priest is found.

Sunday, Bishop Bill preached and celebrated at a combined 9 AM service, during which he commissioned the new search committee in their task. His message was on 1 Corinthians 13 and the central role that agape, God's love, plays in Paul's letters. It was central to his letters, because it was central to his life and the spiritual formation he desired for all Christians.

During big changes in our lives, it's easy to let fear set in: fear of losing important resources, or fear of losing the love in a community. But this agape is what sustains and maintains the people of God through insecurity and change. It transforms and upholds us, both individually and as a community. 1 Corinthians 13 describes the power of that love, a power unlocked by the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. All Saints', Attleboro is pressing into that love as they wait for what God has for them in the coming months.

Please keep them in prayer as they move into the search process for a new head
IN OTHER NEWS

The ADNE Mourns a Close Friend

The ADNE mourns with the Whipps family at the loss of such a wonderful woman and disciple of the Lord. Polly Whipps, along with her husband George, have been long time friends of our diocese. Last week she passed away from this realm to be with our Lord. Below is her obituary. Services were held Saturday, February 13th in Athol, MA.

Pauline (Cooke) Whipps, of Batchelder Road, passed away at home on February 7th surrounded by her family, after a long and brave battle with cancer.

Born in Athol on June 26, 1934, she was the daughter of Libby and Howard Cooke. Polly graduated Athol High School in 1952 and Green Mountain College in 1954. Shortly after college she worked at Olyers Hat Shop on Main St. and later bought the business. She, alongside her husband George, founded Whipps, Inc. in 1977. Polly was active in the company until recently. Many of the employees were like family to Polly - she was very grateful so many came to visit her and prayed for her when she was unable to leave home.

Polly was extremely proud to be the sixth generation born and raised in Athol. While working full time and being very involved with her grandchildren, she always found time for others. She loved her community and enjoyed her involvement with many local organizations including the Athol Historical Society, Athol Hospital Auxiliary, Athol Women's Club and The Salvation Army. Polly was honored to be a Special Reserve Deputy Sheriff for Sheriff Lew of Worcester County.

Some of her fondest memories were during the 10+ years she volunteered at Athol Memorial Hospital's Oncology Clinic with her mother Libby. They spent countless hours comforting and supporting those battling cancer as they were both survivors.

Always early to rise, Polly enjoyed a coffee with friends and hearing or telling the latest news. Never one to sit still, she had many projects including creating the most beautiful Christmas wreaths for the past 45 years. After Thanksgiving dinner was served, Polly would retire to the basement to begin the wreaths. She welcomed help from grandson Michael and many friends; Christmas was her favorite time of year. Polly was the heart and soul of her family.

Polly was a member of Grace Anglican Church, Leominster. She enjoyed sharing her Christian faith. Over the past eighteen months, she gifted more than 200 copies of "Jesus Calling" by Sarah Young to friends and strangers alike. Polly was one-of-a-kind!
Survivors include George, her beloved husband of more than 50 years; and her children Patricia Adams and husband Richard; Elizabeth Whipps and husband Steven Lewis; Susannah Whipps Lee and husband Lac all of Athol; Timothy Clark and wife Marsha of Petersham; Evan Whipps and wife Lisa of Hopkinton, NH and Sarah Kenda and husband Stephen of North Hampton, NH; and grandchildren Sydney, Michael, Richard, Fred, James and David Adams; Samuel, Hannah and Elizabeth Clark, Ashley Legrand, Robert Stair and Danielle Lary; Isabelle, Emily and Olivia Johnson, Derek Lewis; Ella Whipps; Edward Kenda; and great grandchildren: Ava and Libby Adams; Tucker, Morgan and Autumn Legrand; Dallas and Finn Stair. Polly also leaves a brother Richard Whall of Bradford, NH; and sister-in-law Marcia Bell of Burlington, Ontario, and many nieces, nephews and special friends. Polly will also be missed by her faithful dog, Sadie.

* * * * *

The ADNE is happy to announce the upcoming discipleship conference in partnership with Imago Dei Anglican Church, All Saints' Pro-Cathedral, and 3D Movements. 3D Movements is a global movement made up of leaders, church leaders, and lay leaders from across the globe. They continue to work alongside these leaders to put discipleship and mission back in the hands of ordinary people. The Rev. Justin Howard, rector of Imago Dei Anglican Church, writes below of his parish's own walk with 3DM and his vision for helping to bring increased discipleship to the ADNE.

New England is "rocky" and "frozen" soil!

Have you ever heard this? Since the ascension of Jesus the church has sought to follow the Holy Spirit's lead to fulfill the last verbal command of Jesus: "go and make disciples." In every age, place, culture, and under every imaginable circumstance the Church strives to raise up disciples, transformed by the love of Jesus, who are healthy, whole, and faithful to Jesus, joining him on mission.
New England is no exception.

We have historical evidence that the Gospel of Jesus prevails wherever and whenever, and it certainly has prevailed here in the past. Maybe the reason we haven't seen much fruit is because we don't know what to do, let alone how to do it effectively. Unchurched or de-churched people don't just show up to church anymore, and the churched folk that do participate have little or no clue how to make disciples. What if we could see a shift in our own parishes and missions, spearheading a movement in New England to raise up missional disciples?

3DM (3 Dimensional Ministries) was started by Mike Breen, an Anglican priest from Sheffield, England, in order to help train churches in Jesus' way of making disciples. He engaged post-Christendom England by emphasizing a simple missional disciple-making strategy and saw radical Kingdom results. The ADNE has an exciting opportunity March 11th-12th to learn the principles behind catalyzing a culture shift in our churches. 3DM is going to help us explore the dynamics of making disciples of Jesus who can join God in his mission: reproducing disciples instead of just recruiting more volunteers, multiplying communities instead of just adding more people. A 3DM Discipleship+Mission Workshop is a chance to taste and experience:

- Teaching that will help frame discipleship and mission in a new light
- Training with your team to help you apply principles contextually
- Effective vehicles for discipleship and mission, such as Huddles and Missional Communities
- What it's like to be part of a 3DM Learning Community (two-year journey of culture change)

The Rev. Piper Runnion-Bareford and I, along with other leaders in our church, have been in a two-year Learning Community with 3DM and its been phenomenal! Be sure to bring at least one or two of your key leaders as this will generate a unified sense of common mission. It will spark conversations to help you explore the context which surrounds what the Father may be inviting you into, whatever part of the region you may be from.

I believe that cultivating a "common language" around making missional disciples among Anglican leaders in New England will do much in the way of building a collegial fellowship, oneness of Spirit, and mutual support as we share stories and help each other troubleshoot discipleship and mission in our contexts.

You are not alone! We CAN reach New England with the transforming love of Jesus Christ! Let's begin this journey together, and see what God has in store for us. I look forward to it!

The Rev. Justin Howard
Imago Dei Anglican Church, Bangor

Click below to visit the ADNE Event Page for the 3DM Conference and Register today!
The Faith and Mission of Church Army USA

The following post, in conjunction with the ADNE, was written by Fr. Bryan Bywater of Church Army USA in order to spotlight a powerful and needed ministry happening not only within our diocese through one of our priests but throughout the whole country. Church Army and Church Army USA continues to change lives and move forward in its mission. We are grateful to Fr. Bryan for presenting to us its history, local work, and his own personal involvement.
How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?"

- Romans 10:14

History of Church Army USA

The Church Army was founded in England in 1882 by The Rev. Wilson Carlile, who banded together an orderly army of soldiers, officers and a few working men and women, whom he and others trained to act as Church of England evangelists among the outcasts and criminals of the Westminster slums. As a curate in the parish of St Mary Abbott, Kensington, Carlile had experimented with unorthodox forms of Christian meetings and witness, going to where coachmen, valets and others would take their evening stroll and holding open air services, persuading onlookers to say the Scripture readings, and training working people to preach. Previous experience had convinced Carlile that the moral condition of the lowest classes of the people called for new and aggressive action on the part of the Christian Church and that this work was most effectively done by lay people of the same class as those whom it desired to reach.

As the work grew, a training institution for evangelists was started in Oxford with F S Webster as Principal, but soon moved in 1886 to London, where on Bryanston Street near Marble Arch the army headquarters were established. Marie Carlile, Wilson Carlile's sister, was a frail woman who left a life of elegance for the tough, austere life of training women in 1888, followed by the first "Rescue Shelter" for women in 1891; this continued in the mission for fifty years.

Today Church Army is a society of trained and commissioned evangelists in the Anglican Communion throughout the world. Their aim and purpose is winning persons to Christ by providing the Church with trained, disciplined and socially concerned evangelists who reach the least, the last, and the lost; equip others to "do the work of an evangelist"; and further evangelize by ministering where others cannot. Church Army is at work in many provinces and its American branch, Church Army USA, has stations in Pennsylvania, Missouri, New Mexico, Florida, Connecticut, and Maryland to bring the help of Christ and the comfort of the Gospel.

Fr. Bryan Bywater

Bryan Bywater, an evangelist with Church Army USA and a priest in the ADNE, first connected with the organization during seminary at Trinity School for Ministry in 2003 through their café in Ambridge, PA. He kept up the relationship through summer mission trips back to the area while serving as rector of New Hope Anglican Church.

He currently travels preaching and awakening the Church to embrace empathy for the lost and has had the privilege of visiting Kenya, Tanzania, churches in multiple states and others serving in orthodox congregations, whether they be Episcopal, Anglican, or any other Christian denomination. Fr. Bryan has been invited by Archbishop Foley Beach of the ACNA to participate in the formation of the Matthew 25 Gathering in Austin, TX. He will also once again teach the youth track at the New Wineskins Conference this year. Locally he has established services, Bible Studies, Faith discussions and healing services/pastoral care in two assisted-living facilities and a heath rehabilitation community.

The Connecticut Mission

Church Army USA was first established through a base at the Episcopal Cathedral in Downtown Hartford in the 1940s but disappeared as the Church lost
Fr. Bryan and some of the Church Army USA team

its way through the various twists and turns of Episcopal doctrine and practice. It re-emerged almost two years ago and is now locally partnered in Connecticut with World Vision, Urban Alliance, Converge Network, and several local congregations. Among other services for the poor and disenfranchised, they run an underwear distribution program for the transitional homeless, and a group home for people living with HIV/AIDS, which serves a total of 500 monthly.

Over the past year, Church Army USA has been a part of God's restoration in the lives of many in the Connecticut area, creatively finding ways to bring the Light of Christ into the darkest of places. Their physical presence among the broken in their community earned them the right to engage in a few thousand conversations, learning names and listening to stories. Every Saturday they minister in city parks in all sorts of weather, assuring their friends that God has not abandoned them and strongly desires to draw close to the broken-hearted. They have entered into broken dreams, shattered marriages, lost jobs, battles with addiction, and a host of other tragic circumstances, responding through comfort, prayer, and support.

Fr. Bryan has said that "choice is the first thing a person loses when they become marginalized. Restoring choice restores dignity." To that end, this ministry has helped many to slowly take control of their lives, sometimes beginning even with the smallest choice like getting to choose the color of their new underwear. From even a humble choice like that, many have been led towards making deeper choices, such as escaping addiction, receiving forgiveness, and coming to Jesus. This year, the Church Army USA team collectively distributed over 200 bras and pairs of women's underwear, 2,300 t-shirts and pairs of men's underwear, and 5,000 pairs of socks through 60 different volunteers who together gave of themselves 500 hours on Saturdays. That's 12 ½ weeks, or over three months of a 40 hour work week, serving outside day in and day out, caring for the outcast in the name of Jesus.

Prayer is one of God's greatest evangelistic tools and a weapon against sickness and evil, and Church Army USA continues to bring the power of healing prayer back out into the streets and to the sick. Wherever they minister, teams anoint with oil, lay hands on the sick and burdened, and pray bold prayers for wholeness and well-being; they have witnessed hard and true miracles week in and week out. They are training up more and more healing ministers to help raise up those who are broken, so they can begin to find their way back into their communities.

In three separate facilities, they were able to fulfill God's command to "care for the widows and the orphans", holding services and Bible studies for those who could not get to church, as well as those who never went before. There has been deep transformation in the lives of residents, family, and staff in these units, which were once full of cries and now experience singing and laughter in the name of Jesus. Through lively worship, the Gospel is going deep into places where disease cannot reach, whether in these facilities for the disenfranchised or out on the streets.

Fr. Bryan Bywater continues to lead and teach the Church Army USA team in Connecticut, even with his frequent travels to minister in other locations. This year a highlight for him was his trip to Tanzania, going house-to-house praying over the sick, the demonized, and the broken-hearted. He spends many of his Monday nights mentoring and leading a Bible study for young boys currently in prison. Between his individual travels and the work of Church Army USA, Fr. Bryan has a lot on his plate, but he is quick to point out, "I don't do all the work alone. God has provided workers!" Dorothy Smolkis, a candidate with Church Army USA, has worked with him frequently, as well as over 60 volunteers this past year.

Joining the Mission
Church Army USA keeps God’s mission for them at the forefront of their mind: to re-awaken the Church to the love of God and teach them to carry the light into the darkest of places. Fr. Bryan wrote the following regarding their faith and call:

"In all that we do our message is clear and simple: Jesus has not abandoned you. In Him there is Hope. These are my people: the sick, the elderly, the homeless, and the imprisoned. This is my parish; hospital beds, wheel chairs, jail cells, under bridges, in parks, and a group home for folks with HIV/AIDS. These are the sick Jesus told us about. They are the paralytic by the pool waiting to be placed in the healing waters. They are the unclean outside the camp."

Please prayerfully consider joining Fr. Bryan Bywater and the mission at Church Army USA with your financial support. Most of those who benefit from the work in Connecticut are unable to support Fr. Bryan as their priest, so the support of the Church is much needed.

For more information on how to donate, you may find him online at the Church Army USA donation page (you’ll find his name in the drop-down menu). If you would like to write a check, please make it payable to Church Army USA and note Bryan Bywater on the memo line. Mail to:

Church Army USA  
PO Box 413  
Aliquippa, PA 15001

On behalf of Fr. Bryan and Church Army USA, we are thankful for your consideration. Above all, continue to uphold them in prayer as they continue the work God has given them to do in Connecticut and across the country.