



Good News

VALLE CRUCIS CONFERENCE CENTER • SUMMER 2003

DEEPLY ROOTED ON SACRED GROUND

“You have not lived a perfect day unless you’ve done something for someone who will never be able to repay you.”

—Ruth Smeltzer
quoted in “What Jesus Meant” by
Erik Kolbell



THE RT. REV JULIO MURRAY, BISHOP OF PANAMA
AT SUNRISE SERVICE UNDER A MANGO TREE

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

JOINING HANDS & HEARTS TOGETHER *Rebuilding a Community Chapel in Panama*

Inspired by his previous summer’s experience with the Panama Project (a multi-seminary cultural immersion in the culture and Episcopal Church in Panama), Virginia Theological Seminary senior Jason Roberts, working with Panamanian classmate Glenda McQueen, organized a group of five seminarians and one spouse to live and work with Episcopalians in Panama during Virginia Seminary’s spring break. During the ten-day visit, participants lived, prayed, worshiped and worked alongside Panamanians from local Episcopal Churches.

Their project was to begin the rebuilding of the chapel at the Bishop Lemuel B. Shirley Camp

and Conference Center in Santa Clara, Panama. Prior to their trip, the group raised funds for the trip and for building materials. Support was given by Virginia Theological Seminary; St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Alexandria; Church of the Holy Cross, Valle Crucis; Valle Crucis Conference Center; the Diocese of Western North Carolina and Bishop Robert H. Johnson; and individuals, including the seminarians themselves. Inspired by the enthusiasm of the seminarians, individuals and churches in the Diocese of Panama matched the funds raised for the chapel’s building supplies. The youth group from St. Patrick’s, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, seminarian participant Jeff Huston’s home parish, also raised money to present to the Youth Council of the Diocese of Panama for camp scholarships.

Even though every project needs financial support, this project was about much more than raising money. It was truly about people coming together to share their cultures and their love of God. Both clergy and laity from Panama’s Episcopal parishes arrived at the work site to help with the chapel restoration and expansion. Mona and Michael Dresbach, two National Church missionaries serving in Panama, also arrived to help with the work.

In Panama, summer was ending and the school year, along with the rainy season, just beginning. Hundreds of young people from all over Panama had been at the Bishop Shirley Center for summer camp during January and February. The chapel was in desperate need of a new roof and new electrical wiring, as well as additional space for the sacristy and for meeting. Working together as part of the Diocese of Panama’s Nehemiah Project, this American and Panamanian group labored to wash and scrape windows, add a new roof and interior ceiling, create new entry doors, expand the sacristy and add a small meeting room to the chapel. They also scraped old paint off the altar, lectern and pulpit in preparation for a new coat of paint and hauled away numerous truckloads of construction rubble and trash. The work was hard and the

Continued on P. 4

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

—Winston Churchill

"I only know that a wise man once said three hundred years ago that money is like muck: it doesn't do any good unless you spread it around."

—James Qwilleran

THANK YOU

Our Special Thanks to these individuals & organizations for their generosity in giving to the Center in recent months.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Bancroft & Eleanor Smith
Henry L. Coble
Stuart & Edith Tugman
Tom Harris and Ursula Farling and Sada Harris
Matt & Erin West
Laura Toll Carkener
Dagmar & Wright Sherrard
Rodney Knight & Allison Vogt
Ralph Tilden
The Lowrance Family
Bob Norris
Diana Mast White

MEMORIAL GIFTS

In memory of Charles Steineger
by Louise Hatch
In memory of The Rev. Cris Greer
by Margaret & Dick Beckman
In memory of Hamilton Workman
by Sandy & Dorcas Jones
In memory of Duncan Johnstone
by Rogers Branson
In memory of Leo Miller and Lawrence Mertz
by Sidney & Elizabeth Morgan

HONORARIUM GIFTS

In honor of The Rev. Brian Suntken and Sarah & Walter Toy
by Tinka & Joe McArdle
In honor of Randy & Dana Truitt
by John & Eileen Leach
In honor of the ordination of Jeanne Finan
by Michael & Danby Ludgate
by Sam Brooks, Anita Krichmar and Matthew Brooks
by Susan B. Morgan
by Polly & Liberty Laubinger
by Sandy & Dorcas Jones
by Tim, Dianne, Matthew and John P. Finan
by Flo & John Shedd
by Tom Eshelman
by Dorsey, Mark & Hunter Elliott
by Beverly Bressler
In thanksgiving for the Staff at VCCC
by Louise Hatch

BISHOP ROBERT H. JOHNSON HALL

—BUILDING FUND

Mike & Debbie Galleher
John & Virginia Brien
Sandy & Dorcas Jones
Grant from the Pearl Dixon Balthis Foundation
Louise Hatch
Gary Hipp
Pamela Barrett

Gordon & Kay Irwin

—WOOD FLOOR PROJECT

Hugh & Julia Morton
Tom Eshelman & Jeanne Finan
Diana M. White

The Rt. Rev. Robert H. Johnson
Ralph Tilden
Francis & Sibyl Pressly
Reba & Ellis Chapman
Fay & Brenda Binning
Nina-Jo Moore
Harding & Jean Hughes
Nancy & Richard Doss
The Rev. Tim & Beverly McRee
The Rev. John & Christine Zellner
Jack & Leigh Haile
The Herman Family
Bill & Susan Stone
Kay Thompson
Judith Teele
Louise Hatch
In honor of Bishop Johnson
by Mack & Anne Green
In honor of Louise Hatch
by Faye & John Cooper
In honor of Ella Dubose
by Billy DuBose and Mary Jeffcoat
In honor of Ralph Tilden
by Margaret & Dennis Lehmann
In memory of her family
by Barbara Roberts

SEPTIC/SEWER REPLACEMENT FUND

The Rev. Jane Smith
Randy Stanley
Lawrence & Susan Flynn
Dr. & Mrs. Mark Cheek
Arleen & Keith Allen
Richard & Christina Landeck
In honor of Norma Pullum, Kenneth Pullum, Elizabeth Denny, Hammock Wall, Judy Wall, Maggie Wall, David Wall and "Two for Jesus"
by David & Judy Wall
In honor of Sandy and Dorcas Jones
by Andy & Thea White

MATNEY BARN

Wendell Seaver

ROCKING CHAIR FUND

In honor of the 75th Birthday of Lucille Lowrance Arp from the Lowrance Family,
October 19, 2003
In honor of The Rev. Randy Ferebee
by Holley, Todd & Emylin Wright
for Bishop Johnson Hall
In memory of Clifford McRee
by the Board and staff of the Valle Crucis Conference Center
for Bishop Johnson Hall
In loving memory of Sarah Kachoogian
by Diane Kachoogian and Pamela Barrett
In loving memory of Doris Lowrance Heidingger
from her Children

OTHER GIFTS

Washer, dryer and day bed
by Mack & Anne Green
Her book *The First Valle Crucis*
by Ruby Clark Demyen

BITS & PIECES

THE NORTH AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PIPING & DRUMMING

returned to the Valle Crucis Conference Center for their 32nd year in the mountains. Under the able leadership of Major Sandy Jones the piping school each summer educates hundreds of bagpipe enthusiasts from all over the country. If you want to learn more about the school please visit our web site for a link to their web site.

SEPTIC SYSTEM

We received approval of our engineering drawings for the new septic/sewer system which will serve the Inn, the Annex and the Dining Room. Bid packages were sent out in May and a contractor was selected on June 18th. We hope to begin construction sometime in August with completion later this fall. All of us at the Conference Center will be glad to have this long awaited project behind us so we can get on with more important ministries here in the valley.

It is never too early to start thinking about **SNOW, SKIING AND WINTER** in the High Country. Now is the time to make your reservations so that you will be assured of a spot in one of our buildings this winter. Ask about our 10% early bird special for all ski trip bookings in early December (prior to Christmas) when the slopes are less crowded and the skiing is usually great!

"Valle Crucis is well loved by our church. We like it just the way it is!"

—Martha Jones for St. Patrick's ECW, Mooresville, NC



THE REV. JOHN ZELLNER PERFORMS A BLESSING FOR THE NEW MAINTENANCE BUILDING AS DALE TOWNSEND, PAUL TRIVETTE AND CHRIS MASTIN LOOK ON.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Our new maintenance facility is finished! Final permits have been granted. All that is left is some final grading around the building and moving selected pieces of equipment to the new building. Dale Townsend and his crew of Paul Trivette and Chris Mastin are very pleased with their new "home away from home."

Do you remember **THE OLD CATALPA TREE** that used to stand between the Annex and the Inn we had to remove two years ago due to old age and rot? We saved some of the wood from that tree and have used it around the Conference Center to make tables, picture frames and even crosses! These beautiful crosses are not for sale but one of them can be yours for a donation of only \$150.00! Each cross measures approximately 10" X 16" and can be hung on your wall.

The **EFM MENTOR TRAINING PROGRAM**, under the expert guidance of Bev Gaines, came back to Valle Crucis for its third year in the mountains. This year there were six dioceses represented including: Western North Carolina, North Carolina, East Tennessee, Southern Virginia, Georgia and Lexington, KY.



JOHNSON HALL / JUNE 2003

JOHNSON HALL: We have had a less than perfect building season for the past 6 months. Lots of ice and snow this winter coupled with days of rain and very little sunshine has put our building schedule way behind schedule. The Good News is that our fantastic building crew is doing a great job to build a beautiful building that will serve all of our many guests for many years to come.

Our Heritage



JOHN ZELLNER (LEFT) AND
TOM ESHELMAN

by Ralph Tilden

CHAPTER III THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Even today our two Episcopal leaders in the valley follow in the procession of Pennsylvanians who have made significant contributions to our heritage.

Rector of Holy Cross Church for the past two and a half years, the Rev. Dr. John C. Zellner was born and raised in Hazleton, PA. After receiving education degrees in his home state, he graduated from Virginia Theological Seminary. After serving in parishes in the diocese

of Southeast Florida, Virginia, and Easton, he became canonically resident in the Diocese of Western North Carolina, where he served as rector of Holy Cross, Tryon, for nine years. Since becoming rector of Holy Cross, Valle Crucis, he, his wife Christine and their four children have endeared themselves to us all. Father John, as he is affectionately known, has a deep appreciation for liturgy and music, has a warm sense of humor and has been trained in counseling. He has a genuine compassion for the needs and concerns of those committed to his pastoral care.

Executive Director of the Valle Crucis Conference Center for the past six years, Tom Eshelman also has his roots in Pennsylvania. He was born in Lancaster County to an Episcopalian mother and a Mennonite father. His mother's religious wishes and instructions prevailed. He was baptized at St. James' Episcopal Church the same parish where Bishop Ives served as priest some 125 years earlier! After graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, he spent time in Europe, Nepal and India, strengthening his spiritual resources.

Editor's Notes:

Since this series began last year we have received information on other Pennsylvanian connections to Valle Crucis.

The Rev. Mr. Gries arrived in Wilkes County from Valle Crucis as an ordained deacon (and later a priest). William Richard Gries was a native of Pennsylvania and had previously studied medicine and was the son of a physician. He came to Valle Crucis in 1846 to assist Jarvis Buxton in the school for boys and to continue studying theology. While at Valle Crucis he and Brother Skiles shared duties as physicians to the community. Mr. Gries was instrumental in organizing the march, in 1848 to consecrate St. Paul's Church, from the seminary at Valle Crucis to Wilkesboro, at Bishop Ives request. He had a vast knowledge of woodworking and was well versed in "religious matters". In 1854 he moved back to Pennsylvania and was succeeded at St. Paul's by The Rev. Richard Wainwright Barber. During the Civil War he was Chaplain to the Pennsylvania Volunteers. He died in 1868.

William Johnson Alston, an African-American from North Carolina, was a student at Valle Crucis. He later served parishes in Philadelphia, PA.

*Know there is
something beyond
anxiety and fear.
God is to be trusted:
you don't have to
struggle endlessly
in order to be loved.*

—Rowan Williams,
Archbishop of Canterbury

Frederick FitzGerald, a native of Pennsylvania, had been a divinity student at Valle Crucis, and later served parishes in Jackson, Halifax, and Goldsboro until 1860, when he became editor of The Church Intelligencer, published in Raleigh.

William Glenney French, was the superior of the monastic order and director of the mission at Valle Crucis. He left Valle Crucis in early 1850 and served parishes in Pennsylvania and New York prior to his death in 1895.

The Rev. Joseph W. Murphy, who had been born in Ireland, also prepared for the priesthood at Valle Crucis. He had to leave Holy Innocents, Henderson, with much regret as the small parish could not support his large family. He later served parishes in Pennsylvania and died in 1900.

William Passmore, a native of Lancaster, PA, was in charge of the mission until his departure in 1851. He was twenty-eight when he arrived in Valle Crucis. He studied law in Washington, D.C. and taught Greek and Latin at Virginia Theological Seminary but graduated from General Theological Seminary in 1846.

The Rev. Oliver Sherman Prescott had a long, colorful and distinguished career in the Episcopal Church. He attended General Theological Seminary but did not graduate. In 1847 he was one of the first members to take vows in the Society of the Holy Cross. He was charged with heresy by the Bishop of Massachusetts because of his high church practices! In 1869 he went to England to join the newly founded monastic order, the Society of St. John the Evangelist, at Cowley, near Oxford. In the 1870's he returned with two monastic brothers to found a branch of the society in America. He later served as rector of St. Clement's in Philadelphia, PA and died in 1903.

We are sure than many other connections to the great state of Pennsylvania exist in the history of Valle Crucis and hope that any of our readers who have information or photographs to share will do so.

Our next issue will feature extracts from the Diary of William Glenney French who was the director of the mission at Valle Crucis and Superior of the Order of the Holy Cross.

"The surfer looks back for just the right wave and then rides it. Most progressive social movements did not originate with the Episcopal Church. Like the surfer, the church should always keep watch for the next example of the kingdom of God working from outside the church."

—The Rt. Rev. Paul Moore

Directors Report Continued:

weather everyday was hot and humid, but there was always shared laughter and lively discussions, both in Spanish and English.

Each day the group shared prayers and meals, enjoying traditional Panamanian dishes, lovingly prepared by volunteer cooks from parishes around the Diocese.

The final night at the camp, speaking in Spanish, Senor Raoul, the Master Craftsman who supervised the work, lovingly told the seminarian group: "The first day when I saw you, I thought, they won't last two days. I was wrong. You have been worth your weight in gold."

The Right Reverend Julio Murray, Bishop of Panama, visited the work site several times during the week. He also presided and preached at the Sunday morning Holy Eucharist held outside under a large, spreading mango tree on the grounds of the Shirley Center. Mrs. Olga Shirley, wife of the late Bishop Shirley, also visited the work site and talked with the seminarians. Virginia Theological Seminary students who participated include: Jeanne Finan (Diocese of Western North Carolina); Jeff Huston (Diocese of Oklahoma); Glenda McQueen (Diocese of Panama); Jason Roberts (Diocese of Virginia); and Sarah Wood (Diocese of Virginia). The spouse participant was Jeanne Finan's husband, Tom Eshelman, Executive Director of the Valle Crucis Conference Center. Tom, not only participated in the work at the camp, but also donated his time to consult with the Diocese's Nehemiah Project Committee later that week at the Diocesan Office in Panama City.

Parishes in Panama that participated in the project include: Santa Maria Virgen, Arraijan; St. Cristobal, Panama City; St. Albano, Paraiso; and San Sebastian. The Reverend Carmen Saez and the Reverend Nelson Edwards gave generously of their time during the seminarians' visit. Work on the chapel and other facilities at the Center will continue.

If you are interested in being a part of this program through donations or future work trips, please contact Tom Eshelman at the Valle Crucis Conference Center at vccc@highsouth.com or call 828-963-4453.

—Jeanne Finan and Tom Eshelman

"Great place and we will return!"

—David Bingham
for the Starnes Family Reunion



PROGRAMS 2003

AUGUST THROUGH OCTOBER

VALLE CRUCIS CONFERENCE CENTER

AT THE HISTORIC MISSION SCHOOL

Join us for one or more of these programs being offered here at the Center. You can come away for a day of quiet or a longer workshop.

WATERCOLOR WORKSHOP WITH NOYES LONG

August 7-10, 2003

JOURNEY INTO SELF: This workshop will be a hands on exploration of the personal, emotional, and spiritual bases of art-making.

WEEKEND WORKSHOP WITH THE REV. BRIAN SUNTKEN

August 15-17, 2003

What's So Revealing about the Book of Revelations?

The Book of Revelation contains passages of great beauty and comfort, as well as chapters that strike the casual reader as bizarre, bewildering, and sometimes downright frightening. How are those persons on a spiritual journey today to discern God's message in this peculiar book of the bible?

Basic questions such as "Who wrote this document? To Whom? From Where and for what purpose?" will be explored. As well, participants will enhance their understanding of the Book of Revelation by reflecting on the literature of the Greco-Roman period, early Christian traditions, and Jewish apocalypticism found in the Hebrew Scriptures. By breaking the codes of the last book of the New Testament, and time for quiet reflection, those on retreat will find new understandings about the Bible and their own spiritual journey.

Brian Sunkten will take us on a journey through stories, humor and his obvious love of God and the Bible. His workshops always sell out fast so please reserve your spot ASAP.

Cost: \$170 includes 2 nights lodging, and all meals.
Commuter space available at \$130

VIOLENCE TO WHOLENESS WEEKEND WORKSHOP

August 29-31, 2003

A spiritual journey—from despair to hope—from fear to grace—from fragmentation to wholeness—From Violence to Wholeness is based on the power of love, on a desire for the well being of all, and on a longing to end the cycle of personal, interpersonal, and systemic violence afflicting our world. This workshop will include worship and ritual, small group discussion, journal reflection, meditation, readings and interactive non-violence.

Facilitators will be Beth Turner – Assistant to the Bishop for Christian Formation and Justice and Outreach Ministries; Barbara Plimpton and Pattie Curtis.

Cost: \$170 includes 2 nights lodging, and all meals.
Workshop is limited to 15 persons
Early registration is encouraged.
Limited commuter space available at \$130

PROGRAM DAYS:

• YOUR STORY

Monday, Sept. 15, 2003 / 10AM - 3PM

This one-day workshop will assist you to see God's holy presence throughout your life. Through written exercises and biblically-based discussions, participants will review events that have shaped their lives. Whether you want to write a personal narrative of your entire past or shape sketches to share with children, grandchildren, or other relatives, this workshop will get you started in a supportive and confidential setting.

Barbara Plimpton will be the facilitator. She is a parishioner at All Souls Cathedral and holds a Masters Degree from Troy State University and the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass. She has led spiritual autobiography workshops in Maine and Western North Carolina.

Cost: \$35 includes lunch.

• PUTTING YOUR AFFAIRS IN ORDER: END OF LIFE PLANNING

Monday, Oct. 6, 2003 / 10AM - 3PM

Getting your affairs in order is one of the most loving things you can do for your family and friends. Legal papers, medical wishes, biographical information, plans for a memorial service ... this workshop will help you gather this information in one place by completing a workbook published by the Commission on Aging in the Diocese of WNC. Healthcare workers, attorneys, chaplains, clergy, and others will join us for the day. This workshop is appropriate for adults of all ages. Please bring your address book and any thoughts you have for your memorial service.

Facilitators: WNC Diocesan Commission on Aging.

Cost: \$35 includes lunch and End of Life Planning workbook.

• DAY WITH OUR LABYRINTHS

Monday, Oct. 13, 2003 / 10AM - 3PM

Please come join us for a day spent in looking at the history of labyrinths, walking our three labyrinths, and taking some special quiet time to rediscover this ancient meditative tool of relaxation and talking with God. Tom Eshelman facilitates.

Cost: \$35 includes lunch

Scholarships

If you wish to apply for a limited number of scholarships which are offered for some of our programs please call for more information.



GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

• **Class Size:** We are committed to keeping our class size small as we believe it is in the small group environment that learning and spirituality flourish. Because class sizes are kept small, classes fill quickly. Early registration is encouraged!

• **Price and Room Policies:** Listed prices for programs include room, board, tuition and materials. Most accommodations are double, triple or quadruple occupancy. If you prefer a single room, we will try to accommodate you though we cannot guarantee this until check-in when the final availability of single rooms can be determined. Please notify VCCC in advance if you have any medical needs such as diet or disability accommodations. We are unable to accommodate pets or provide childcare. Smoking is not permitted in any building.

• **Meals:** We serve home-cooked, nutritious meals. The fare is hearty. Our kitchen staff will try to accommodate any special dietary needs if they receive 14 days prior notice. If you have any dietary questions, please give us a call.

• **Timing:** Unless otherwise noted, conferences begin with registration and check in at 4:00 p.m. on opening day, followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m.

They close after the 12 noon lunch on the closing day. To assist our housekeeping staff, we request that you complete your check out prior to lunch closing day.

• **To Register:** A non-refundable, non-transferable deposit of \$50 is required for each course **except for single day programs when a non-refundable payment in full is required.** Please mail your check with the completed registration form.

• **Directions:** You will receive directions to the conference center with your registration confirmation. We are easy to find and are located just 9 miles outside of Boone, NC (2 hours from Winston Salem; 2-1/2 hours from Charlotte). The closest airports are Hickory, NC, and Johnson City (Tri-Cities), TN, both approximately 90 minutes from the Center.

• **Commuters:** A limited number of spaces are available in each program for commuters not requiring lodging. The fee does include three meals per day as mealtime is an important part of the program's fellowship. Those who choose to commute are encouraged to make a commitment to full participation in all meals and community activities.

REGISTRATION

(Feel free to copy this form but please use one form per person)

Event for which you are registering: _____

Starting Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Your Faith Tradition: _____

** I would like to room with _____

____ I will not be staying at the Conference Center but will commute.

____ I am coming for a Program Day and will not need lodging.

(if you wish to arrive the night before a Program Day, please call to check on room availability.)

Enclosed: ____ Nonrefundable, nontransferable deposit of \$ _____

____ Full payment of \$ _____

Please return this complete form with your check (payable to "VCCC") to the address below.

You will receive a registration confirmation with any further information necessary.

VCCC, PO Box 654, Valle Crucis, NC 28691

** When requesting a specific room mate(s), registration forms and deposits should be mailed together.



VALLE CRUCIS CONFERENCE CENTER

AT THE HISTORIC MISSION SCHOOL

Telephone: 828-963-4453
Facsimile: 828-963-8806
E-Mail: vccc@highsouth.com
Web Page: www.highsouth.com/vallecrucis

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Valle Crucis Conference Center is to inspire, by loving example and service, those who break bread with us and share in the quest for spiritual renewal, Christian community and stewardship of this sacred place.

The Right Reverend Robert H. Johnson
Bishop of the Diocese of Western North Carolina

Valle Crucis Conference Center
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Yates, President
Ralph Tilden, Vice President
Brenda Binning, Treasurer
The Rev. Brian Cole, Secretary

Diana White
The Rev. Tim McRee
Billy DuBose
Tom Eshelman (ex-officio)
Jaan Ferree
Jack Haile
Nina-Jo Moore
Judy Teele



EDITOR: TOM EHELMAN • DESIGNER: DEBORAH MAYHALL BRADSHAW • DIR. OF DISTR: WENDELL SEAVER • PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER AT SOS PRINTING



VALLE CRUCIS
CONFERENCE CENTER

Post Office Box 654
Valle Crucis, NC 28691

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Boone, NC
Permit No. 34



Good News

**PLEASE CHECK YOUR
ADDRESS AND CALL OR
E-MAIL US IF IT IS NOT
CORRECT. THANKS!**