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# Iowa connections

NEWS OF THE DIOCESE OF IOWA

February 2010

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## Independence Revolving Closet a joint "mission" of love

By Tari Robertson

Walking into the bright, clean interior of Revolving Closet in the basement of St. James Episcopal Church Fellowship Hall in Independence, it is hard to believe the space was once a dark, damp, "dungeon."

Organized by Holy Spirit Ministries, Inc., Outreach (HSM), Revolving Closet provides gently used clothing to low-income families. It is a joint outreach mission of HSM and St. James Episcopal Church.

As explained by Sue Ann Raymond, pastor of St. James, "(Our church) is the mission field for Holy Spirit Ministries. Now we have the opportunity to minister to the community together! ... Three months ago, this space would have rivaled the horrors of any haunted house. HSM completely remodeled the area now used by the Revolving Closet, and are currently in the process of completing renovation of the entire parish hall basement!"

According to Raymond, St. James' small congregation didn't use the basement for much of anything except occasional storage.

"Both congregations worked hard," HSM outreach coordinator Lizz Cabalka added. "We bleached the walls, sealed leaky windows, repaired walls and floor, updated wiring, installed a drop ceiling, and did lots and lots of painting."

A homeless man even helped with the painting process. "He left his job at the carnival when it was in town, and needed a bus ticket home," Raymond explained. "I mentioned that we could use help with painting. He was happy to lend a hand. While I arranged for his trip home, he spent the day working hard and did a really good job! Turned out, he

had once been a house painter."

Once the basement was habitable again, work began on the clothing pantry set-up. The former Davidson's clothing store donated hangers, leftover merchandise, baskets, bows and growth charts," Cabalka explained. "We received shelving, a cash register, and check-out bench from Danielle Steines, who once owned a children's clothing store. And, of course, had lots dropped off through personal donations and clothing drives."

The Revolving Closet Clothing Pantry officially opened for business Oct. 6. According to the mission statement, the closet was organized "to provide low-income families with basic human needs that families lack the ability to supply on their own. It is our heart to serve our communities with the same compassion as Christ and help to ease the financial burdens that keep families from thriving."

To qualify for free clothing allotments, families/individuals must be referred by community action agencies, or provide proof of income, and fill out paperwork at the shop. Clothing vouch-

*Continued on page C*



*Pictured above: The once "dungeon-like" interior of St. James Episcopal Fellowship Hall has been transformed into the welcoming Revolving Closet clothing pantry. Men's, women's and children's clothes are neatly arranged by size, and a fitting room and mirror are available to customers.*

*Pictured below: Sue Ann Raymond and Lizz Cabalka. (Tari Robertson Photos)*



*Iowa Connections/Episcopal News Monthly A*

# From Bishop Scarfe

**“Congregational strength is not about growth in numbers and wealth, but about being of the purpose of God’s mission.”**

Every week day at noon, we gather in the Chapel of the Epiphany in Mills House for noonday prayers. The intercessions begin with a reminder of our ministry theme for the year which for 2010 is of course “Strengthening Congregations.”

The prayer created for the occasion soon sets the purpose of our being strengthened: “May God grant each of us and our congregations the strength to pursue God’s mission through the Church – to restore all people to unity with God and each other – as we pray and worship, proclaim the Gospel, and promote justice, peace and love.”

We seek God’s strength to do God’s mission, and nowhere is that more tested than when faced with the kinds of devastation we have witnessed over the past few weeks in Haiti. The pain is felt more keenly because Haiti is where The Episcopal Church has its largest diocese and where many are engaged in mission.

Where does one begin to respond? And how do we handle the sense of helplessness which exposes our weakness?

Scripture speaks of God’s strength being made perfect in weakness; that “when we are weak then we are strong.” How is it then that the evidence of our weakness or helplessness threatens us?

We know that to be in control is essential to our peace of mind. When we are faced with the sights of buildings tumbling onto hundreds and thousands of people right

on our door step, on people who as one of our clergy said to me “on a usual day wake up to more trials in living out their day than we could possibly imagine” then we confront a human reality which also provokes our guilt.

We begin to understand that strength is relative. Congregational strength is not about growth in numbers and wealth, but about being of the purpose of God’s mission. That in turn means having the courage to work out how to respond in our helplessness to the crying needs of our neighbors and reorder our priorities.

Parents do this quite naturally when faced with a critically ill child. Other things, which seemed so important and of such value to our time and passion, suddenly pale in contrast to the real suffering which presses in on us. A different strength is required, one which love embraces. This is a love which finds the strength to face another’s hurts, and which digs deeper into its own fabric to find new resources that will help someone else, even at its own cost.

This strong love is worth praying for and cultivating. It is an invitation to learn more about God’s own strength, the one made perfect in weakness.

We know that this horrendous natural disaster is not going to be the last. We can only ask for strength to be able to respond wherever love calls to us. We can seek to mitigate circumstances by opening

up the world to greater sharing of resources as a global community, by learning the lessons of a more gentle use of this earth we live on and by really gambling on re-ordering our priorities to those which affirm all of life. This may not be unique to Christianity but neither is it paganism or secularism.

It is Divine common sense for humanity and one that we who call ourselves by the name of God’s Son are asked to model. This Lent will be colored by the sights and sounds of Haiti.

What better time to learn a new definition of strength, God’s own strength, that which empties to serve rather than takes its fill, which takes a cross and not a sword, and

which knows this as the only way to resurrection. As we pray for stronger congregations, let it be to this end.

+Alan



*Bishop Alan Scarfe. Photo Timothy Wagner.*

## CALLING ALL WARDENS

### Wardens Workshop

Our Diocesan Chancellors, Tom Carpenter and Linda Neuman, will hold a Wardens Workshop on Saturday, February 27, 2010 from 10:00 AM to approximately 3:00 PM at a location yet to be determined.

Discussion topics will include canonical and legal responsibilities of Wardens, practical considerations for Wardens, relationships with Rector, Vestry and congregation, and other topics of interest.

### Indicate Your Interest

Register your interest online at  
<http://iowaepiscopal.siteoncall.com/events/>  
 or Email [diocese@iowaepiscopal.org](mailto:diocese@iowaepiscopal.org)  
 or Call the diocesan office at 515-277-6165

*If you have specific topics you would like to be included, please indicate when you register your interest, or contact Tom Carpenter ([tcarpenter@grefesidney.com](mailto:tcarpenter@grefesidney.com)) or Linda Neuman ([lkne@neumanadr.com](mailto:lkne@neumanadr.com)).*

## Bishop’s Schedule

### February

- 7 Grinnell, St. Paul’s
- 7 Iowa City, Trinity  
*(Rededication of the sanctuary 3:30 p.m.)*
- 10 Council Bluffs, St. Paul’s  
*(Renewal of Ministry and Welcoming of New Rector, The Rev. Meg Clark Rhodes 5:30 p.m.)*
- 13 Minneapolis, Consecration of Bishop of Minnesota,  
*The Rev. Brian Prior*
- 14 Ames, St. John’s
- 17 Ash Wednesday
- 21 Waterloo, Trinity

### March

- 7 Keokuk, St. John’s *(Prison Ministry Sunday)*
- 14 Sioux City, St. Paul’s Indian Mission *(Daylight Savings Time begins)*
- 18-25 House of Bishops meeting
- 28 Cedar Rapids, Grace Church *(Palm Sunday)*

## Iowa Connections

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# Shively's health care mission in Haiti

By Dr. T.R. Shively  
St. Alhan's, Spirit Lake

There is a Haitian proverb that goes like this: "Bondye konn bay, men li pa konn separe."

Literally translated, it means: "God gives, but does not share."

That proverb came to me in reading Tracy Kidder's book, *Mountains Beyond Mountains; The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World*.

The more I thought about that proverb, it became apparent that I would need to find out for myself. Soon, as the Holy Spirit would have it, Ted Gaiser, a good friend whom I'd met through the Global Episcopal Mission Network, informed me that he was planning to be a part of a Diocese of Massachusetts health care mission going to the mountains of Haiti and they would like to include a dentist. I knew then it was a part of my calling. I contacted him, and we began to communicate and plan.

On September 28, 2009, I joined the team in Boston. We flew to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and then motored out of the capital city in a van and truck to Loegane. We stayed overnight at a guesthouse adjacent to the Hospital St. Croix.

The next morning found us heading to the mountains. We transported several miles in the truck and van to the end of the road.

The infrastructure in Haiti is very devastated. At Fondwa, we began our hike on mountain trails to Lazile. This trek took nearly three hours to reach our destination, the homestead of Madame and Monsieur Dezire. There perched on a moun-

tain ridge, we began our clinic, in "mountains beyond mountains."

The dental "office" was set up in a gazebo fashioned of branches and bushes. There, we treated patients for several days.

The people were all very polite and pleasant. The gratitude was expressed verbally, but also by the wearing of their "Sunday best" when they came to see us.

During this entire experience, I continued to think of that proverb. Even in the makeshift bed, located in the chicken coop, in which I slept. After sharing and living with these gracious people, the clarity of those words came to me.

God gives us humans everything we need to flourish, but he's not the one who is supposed to divvy up the bounty. That charge is laid upon us. Of course! Our baptismal covenant.

Tout moun se moun = We are all human beings.

*Note: Dr. Shively originally posted this article as a blog, prior to the devastating earthquake in Haiti on January 12, 2010.*

*Shively adds, "The Anglican church where we worshiped and*

*served countless number of patients while in the mountains of Haiti no longer exists. I ask for special prayers for St. Etienne's priest and congregation. They and the surrounding community no longer have*

*a church. We ask for prayers for all there in Haiti."*

*To support Episcopal Relief and Development efforts in Haiti visit [www.er-d.org](http://www.er-d.org).*



## Independence closet continued

ers will be handed out to qualifying individuals or families.

The Revolving Closet will also operate as a thrift store and is open to the public, providing low-cost clothing for anyone. The endeavor is non-profit and proceeds will go toward outreach support.

Initially, Cabalka said, church members spent a lot of time sewing on buttons, doing minor repairs, taking out stains and washing some of the donated garments, "but, we just don't have time to do that anymore. We are still getting donations in, but are getting kind of picky about what we can accept. If clothes are dirty, missing buttons or have stains, we won't put them out. So please repair before donating. Clothes that are not used will be given to Goodwill, where they are baled and sold for textile recycling. ... One of our long term goals is to purchase a baler ourselves. Textile recycling would be a huge fundraiser for us."

Donations of clothes, shoes, belts, coats, hats, gloves, underwear, purses, socks and any other related items can be dropped off in the computer center of St. James Church Monday-Friday, 2-5 p.m..

The Revolving Closet is open Tuesdays 9 a.m.- 5 p.m.; Wednesdays 9 a.m.-noon; Thursdays 1 p.m.-7 p.m.; and Fridays 9 a.m.- 5 p.m.. Closed Mondays, weekends and holidays.

"It's amazing how two small and unlikely churches, like St. James and HSM, have been able to accomplish such great things by working together," Raymond said. "We have a wonderful relationship. Now we just need people to come!"

The Revolving Closet is located behind Independence Post Office, in the basement of St. James Fellowship Hall. Use the rear entrance, and park in the lot south of the post office.

*Story and Photos by Tari Robertson, Features Editor for THE NEWS (reprinted with Publisher's permission)*

**Have You Heard???**  
**A new Iowa Episcopal Camp is coming this summer!**  
**June 27-July 2**  
**Pictured Rocks UMC Camp, Monticello**  
**[www.picturedrocks.org](http://www.picturedrocks.org)**  
**For 3rd-12th graders. Adult volunteers needed.**  
**Contact Lydia Kelsey at [lkelsey@iowaepiscopal.org](mailto:lkelsey@iowaepiscopal.org).**

# Bruckner, Kelsey, & Scarfe appointed to Episcopal Standing Committees and Commissions

In the months following the 2009 General Convention of the Episcopal Church, Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts-Schori and President of the House of Deputies, Bonnie Anderson invited Episcopals around the world to serve on various committees, commissions, agencies and boards, often referred to as CCABs.

Bishop Alan Scarfe, Ellen Bruckner, and Lydia Kelsey were among those asked to serve.

Bishop Scarfe accepted an invitation to serve on both the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance as well as the Standing Commission on Social Justice and Public Policy.

Ellen Bruckner, Diocesan Ministry Developer, was also appointed to the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget & Finance.

Lydia Kelsey, Missioner for Children and Youth, serves on the

Standing Commission on Lifelong Christian Formation and Education.

The Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance consists of 27 members of the General Convention. The group is made up of one Bishop, and two members of the House of Deputies, either Lay or Clerical, from each Province. Members are appointed for three-year terms.

Both the Standing Commission on Social Justice and Policy and the Standing Commission on Lifelong Christian Formation and Education are made up of a total of 12 people; three bishops, three priests or deacons, and six lay persons. The Presiding Bishop appoints the bishops, and the President of the House of Deputies appoints all others.

Bishop Scarfe's appointment to the Commission on Social Justice and Public Policy comes after serving six years on the Standing Com-

mission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations.

Scarfe requested to be appointed to the Social Justice and Public Policy Commission, writing to the Presiding Bishop in order to "bring some of the Midwest viewpoint to what often is seen as a bi-coastal commission."

The areas of focus that Scarfe has volunteered for on the commission are issues of climate change, food, and the environment. "I've also volunteered to begin articulating theological underpinning for all the work that we do," says Scarfe.

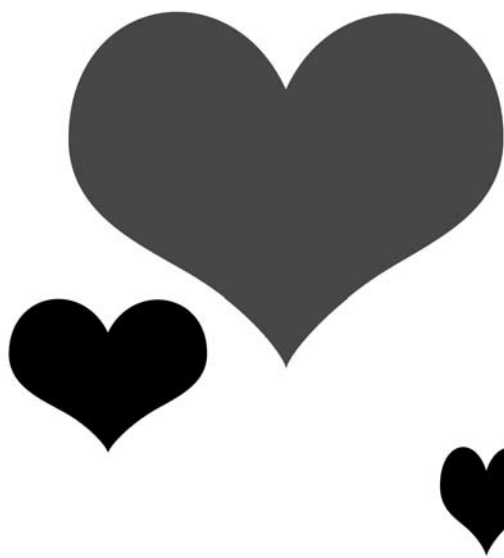
He looks forward to his time on the commission. "From my first experience meeting with this group, I am somewhat overawed by the passion for justice of people on the commission, all of whom are people of real action. They are all very much activists and have a sacrificial approach to social justice. Who knows, it might rub off" Scarfe says.

Bishop Scarfe's background in activism stems from time he spent as a Christian worker fighting for human rights in Communist countries during the first 10 years of his ministry life immediately after college.

The purpose of CCABs are to create policy recommendations for the next General Convention. Each CCAB is guided by a mandate which can be found in the resolution, Canon, by-law, or rule that created it.

The General Convention refers resolutions to CCABs for study. Members may also raise new issues for consideration and each CCAB reports back to the Episcopal Church with a report in the "Blue Book."

## Listen to the Heartbeat...



**February 12 & 13, 2010**

Christ Episcopal Church  
220 40th Street NE, Cedar Rapids  
319.363.2029  
[www.christepiscopal.org](http://www.christepiscopal.org)

***A Diocese of Iowa gathering of people engaged in mission or desiring to enter into mission experience...***

### **Conference Schedule**

**Friday, February 12**

6 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.  
soup supper, mission, compline

**Saturday, February 13**

8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
lunch included

*Also, on Sunday, February 14, from 1-4 p.m., Ted Gaiser will lead a health care mission roundtable discussion. All are welcome to both sessions.*

**Led by  
Ted Gaiser**

*Deacon for Global Partnerships  
Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts  
&*

**Judith Jones**

*Millennium Development Goals Officer  
Episcopal Diocese of Iowa*

***Heartbeat participants will be led on a journey of the theology & meaning as well as the nuts and bolts of mission trips.***

***Join others from around the diocese in lively discussion and interactive learning.***