



The Circuit Rider

Life in the Big Bend Episcopal Mission – October 2007

Bishop Steenson Visits

Bishop Jeffrey Steenson visited St. Paul's and St. James' on Sunday, September 30th. A potluck meal was provided at St. James'. Bishop Steenson spoke with us about his decision to resign as our diocesan bishop effective January 1st (for details see Bishop's Pastoral Letter on page two.) Many thanks to everyone who helped make the Bishop's visit such a special occasion.



Vicar Selected for Clergy Leadership Project

The Rev. Judith Burgess, Vicar of the Big Bend Episcopal Mission, has been chosen as one of 30 participants in the twenty-second class of the Clergy Leadership Project to take place in West Cornwall, Connecticut. Several hundred clergy were nominated from across the nation and participants were selected on the basis of talent, experience, geography, leadership ability, and other criteria.

The Clergy Leadership Project is a national initiative formed to develop and



strengthen clergy leaders, supporting new visions for vigorous ministries in their congregations and communities as well as support their personal growth. Trinity Church, Wall Street in New York City and The Episcopal Church Foundation initially funded this leadership model. Today Trinity Church is the sole sponsor of the project.

Judy will be attending a six day conference, October 21-26 and will continue to meet with her clergy colleagues for another three sessions as they prepare to equip themselves for the vigorous task of leading the church in the 21st century.

Two Received by Bishop Steenson

During Sunday services on September 30th, Bishop Steenson received two parishioners into the Episcopal Church. St. Paul's welcomes Lynn Crowley, and St. James' welcomes Odell Missildine. The *Guidelines for Reception and Confirmation for Persons Joining the Episcopal Church* say in part: "Baptized persons who have received the laying-on of hands at Confirmation by a Bishop in apostolic succession should be considered baptized and confirmed and may therefore be received by a Bishop in this



church [Title I, Canon 17, Section 1(d)]. 'Bishops in apostolic succession' includes the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and others.... Baptized persons may also be received by laying-on of hands of a Bishop rather than being confirmed, if such persons have previously made adult affirmations of faith in their own traditions [Title I, Canon 17, Section 1(c)].



Judy Probst of St. James' was elected President of the Board of Directors of the Boys & Girls Club of Terlingua at their September meeting. Judy's energy and expertise will be a great asset to the club in the coming months.

"No matter what happens, somebody will find a way to take it too seriously."

- Author Unknown

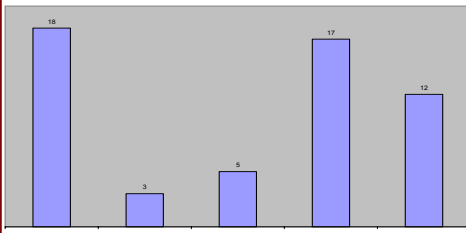
Betsy Burns Analyzes Medical Van Use

In conjunction with preparation for a public transportation system in the Big Bend, St. Paul's member Betsy Burns has done extensive analysis of the trips made by the



Big Bend Mission medical van. The van provides travel assistance for any rider and companions in need of transportation to medical appointments. Betsy's work has helped document the need for public transportation in Brewster County and the Big

Big Bend Episcopal Mission Trip Destinations
August 2006 - July 2007



Bend Region. A substantial grant has been obtained to fund the transportation service which is scheduled to be available some time in 2008.

Last Month's Question: How many people are required to celebrate the Eucharist?

Answer: Celebration of the Eucharist requires two or more people. The celebrant must also be ordained as bishop or priest.

This Month's Question: Why is our prayer book called the Book of "Common" Prayer?

The Thursday book group at St. Paul's has started reading *Free of Charge*, by Miroslav Volf. The theme of the book is "giving and forgiving in a culture stripped of grace." Books available at St. Paul's.

Bishop Steenson Resigns

Pastoral Letter to the Diocese of the Rio Grande of the Rio Grande

Dear Friends in Christ,

Yesterday at the House of Bishops meeting in New Orleans I began the final process of resigning as Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande by the end of the year. This has been an extraordinarily difficult decision to make, primarily because of the pastoral relationships I have with you, the people of this diocese. I deeply regret the distress this is bound to cause, but there should be no doubt that this diocese will move through this transition with renewed vigor for its mission and life.

As I wrote to the clergy of the diocese, it is a matter of conscience about a number of questions that go to the very heart of what I understand the nature of the Church to be. I hasten to add that the House of Bishops has gone out of its way to welcome me and has at this meeting taken steps to insure an honored place for conservative Episcopalians. But for me as a bishop, the obligation of my ordination vow to uphold the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church presents a unique challenge. An effective leader cannot be so conflicted about the guiding principles of the Church he serves. It concerns me that this has affected my ability to lead this diocese with a clear and hopeful vision for its mission. I also have sensed how important it is for those of us in this position to model a gracious way to leave the Episcopal Church in a manner respectful of its laws.

I believe that God's call to us is always positive, always a to and not a from. Many of you already know of my love for the Catholic Church and my conviction that this is the true home of Anglicanism. I told the bishops of my hope that this not be seen as a repudiation of the Episcopal Church but the realization of something I have always felt as an Anglican. Many of them are my friends, and we made a commitment to see this as an opportunity to work more diligently toward the unity Jesus prayed for his Church and his disciples. I hope that we can make this commitment as well.

I want to assure you that the Standing Committee has already begun the process of planning for a harmonious transition, including interim episcopal ministry. The Standing Committee is in consultation with the Office of Pastoral Development and Bishop Clay Matthews about the necessary steps to elect a new bishop. I am confident that you will be able to elect a godly bishop who is right for this diocese.

The Standing Committee becomes more than a giver of advice and consent during a transition. It becomes the ecclesiastical authority, and I am pleased that this diocese will be in the hands of such faithful and wise leaders. My work these next weeks will focus on those congregations themselves in transition and to lay as good of a foundation as possible for the one God will call to follow as your bishop.

Please know of my love and appreciation for all of you in this wonderful family of faith. And please keep me in your prayers as you will be in mine.

Yours faithfully in Christ, +Jeffrey Steenson



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Annual Day for Kids and Disco Cookoff at the Boys & Girls Club



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